WORLD WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT® PRESENTS

THE REST OF 2004

Inside: The 2004 Superstars Of The Year!

***Raw* and *SmackDown!*: The Year in Review**

40-Page Pictorial: The Best In Photos From '04

Complete PPV Results, Featuring *WrestleMania XX!*

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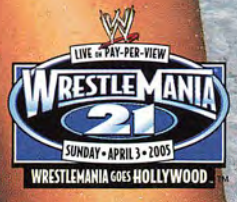

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THE BEST OF 2004

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TRAIL OF CARNAGE

LOOKING BACK ON WWE IN 2004

What a year it's been! In 2004, *WrestleMania* celebrated its 20th year and *SmackDown!* celebrated it's fifth anniversary. Eddie Guerrero and Chris Benoit reigned as World Champions simultaneously. Randy Orton became the youngest World Champion in history. We saw both the *Raw* Diva Search and the *Tough Enough* Challenge. We witnessed the emergence of Heidenreich, Gene Snitsky and Carlito, as well as the departures of Goldberg, Stone Cold and Brock Lesnar.

The year was filled with unparalleled excitement and action. It was bombastic and historic, hilarious and heinous, intense and incredible. The past year was many things, but "predictable" certainly wasn't one of them. Try as we might, there was no way to imagine all the insane twists and turns that WWE would take us on. Attempting to get it all into one special magazine was our ultimate goal, and what you now hold in your hands is the achievement of that goal.

Right up to the last second, we worked to cram these 120 pages with everything that made 2004 special. If it happened in 2004, and it was memorable, it's here.

We've got Superstar of the Year awards for both *Raw* and *SmackDown!*, presented by both brands' respective magazines. A 20-page section recaps the finest (and lowest) moments of both programs. There's also coverage of every pay-per-view event presented in 2004, including some never-before-seen photos.

But topping it all off is our unprecedented 40-page "Year in Photos." WWE boasts some of the finest sports photography in the world, and we're letting it all hang out with this one. Some of 2004's most dramatic moments have been captured here in stunning fashion. From the ring's most shocking scenes to the Superstars' candid moments away from the arena, we've scoured an entire year's worth of pictures and selected the best.

In all, 2004 was a year that changed WWE forever, which is why we devoted an entire magazine to it. It was a wild and crazy ride, made all the more memorable by the certainty that what's in the future will only continue to raise the bar. ■

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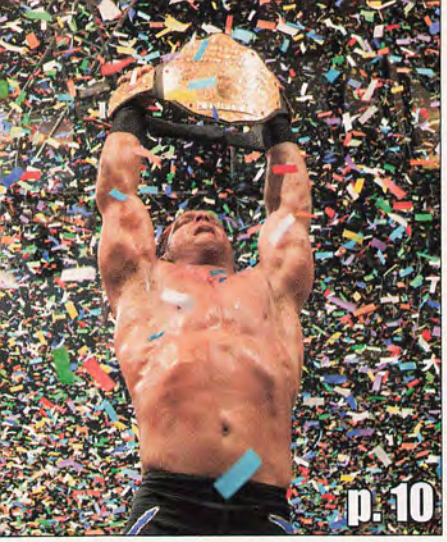

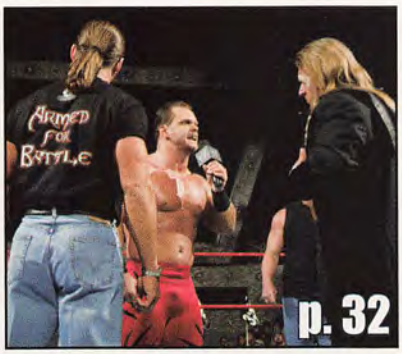

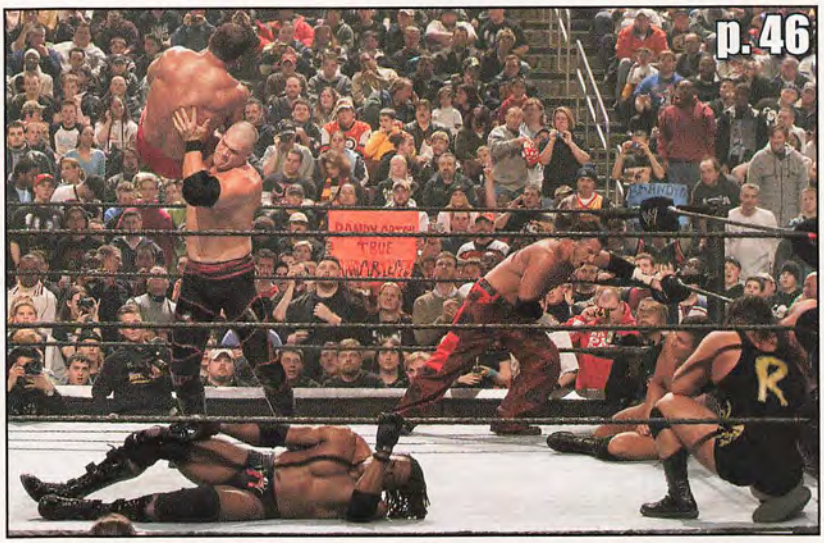

World Wrestling Entertainment® Presents

THE BEST OF 2004

Features

10 Year of the Wolverine
He won the World Heavyweight Championship at the biggest show of the year, captured the World Tag Team titles twice, and Triple H has yet to beat him. Chris Benoit is *Raw Magazine's* pick for *Raw* Superstar of the Year.

16 JBL's Rising Stock
He went from tag-team specialist to main-event Superstar, enjoyed the longest WWE Championship reign in eight years, and survived onslaughts from Eddie Guerrero, Undertaker and Booker T. JBL is *SmackDown! Magazine's* pick for *SmackDown!* Superstar of the Year.

20 2004: The Year in *SmackDown!*
Titles changed hands, Superstars changed loyalties, and Big Show changed his hairstyle. Relive *SmackDown!'s* most memorable moments of the year with our in-depth recap.

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WWE's longest-running program enjoyed the hottest 12 months in its 12-year history. Without question, 2004 changed the face of *Raw*—check out this special section and see for yourself.

46 Only on Pay-Per-View
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76 A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words
Nowhere is the drama, the intensity and the passion of WWE more evident than in this unique photo section. Packed with more than 40 pages of exclusive pix, it's the next best thing to being in the ring.

120 Gone, But Never Forgotten
Remembering those who left us in 2004.

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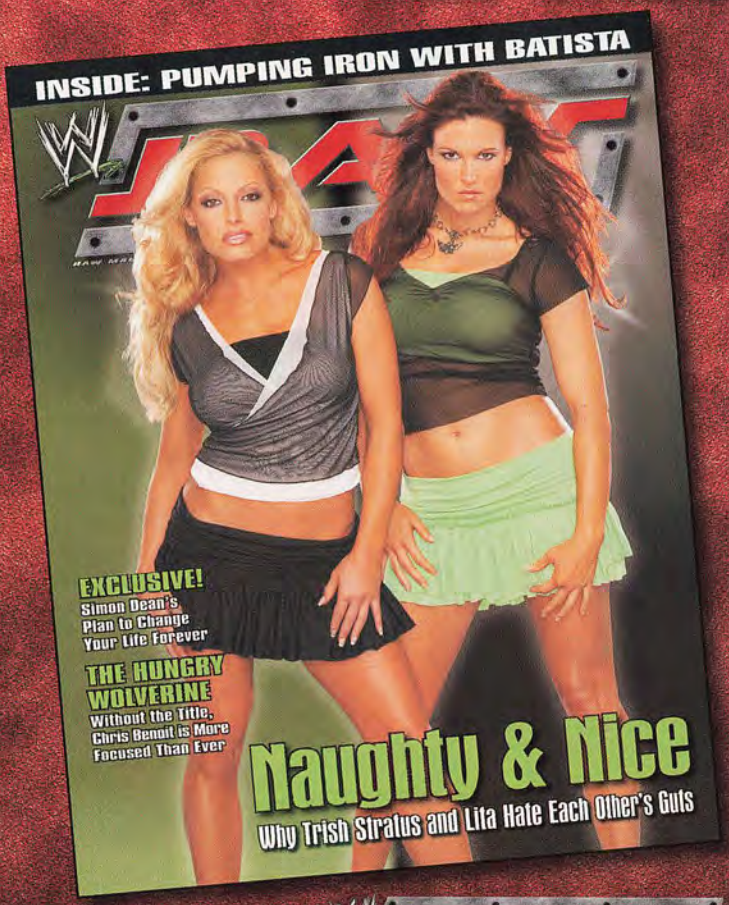

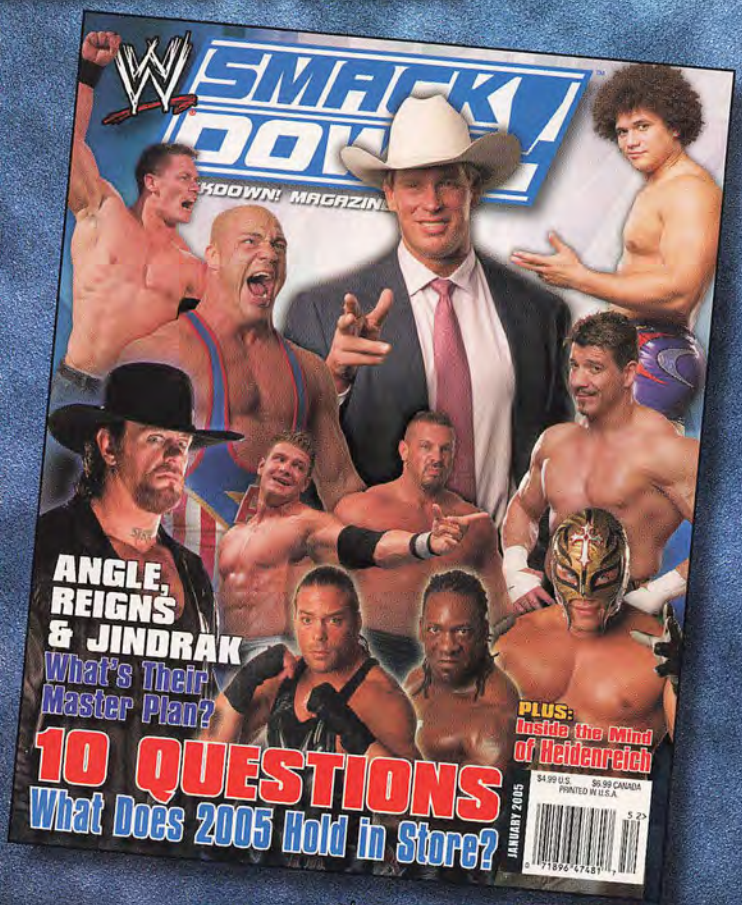

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Raw Magazine Presents... *Raw's* 2004 Superstar of the Year:

CHRIS

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."
— Sir Winston Churchill

They say the true test for any human being is adversity. Chris Benoit has had more than his share. For 18 years, the Canadian-born Superstar was told he'd never reach the pinnacle of sports-entertainment. However, all of that changed in 2004, when Chris Benoit proved his naysayers wrong and showed the world that he's for real.

From the time he broke into the industry, Benoit swam through a sea of criticism. The Crippler was pegged as "too small, too quiet, and just not good enough." And although he came ever so close to justifying his journey with gold on numerous occasions, circumstances beyond his control kept the Wolverine from realizing his lifelong dream.

Much like the storied Boston Red Sox, and the "Curse of the Bambino," Benoit had developed a reputation of always being the bridesmaid, but never the bride. He was always in contention, but many believed Benoit didn't have what it took to win a World Championship. And, in a way, his critics were right.

In January 2000, Benoit defeated Sid Vicious for the WCW World title.

Benoit, tired of the chaos that enveloped WCW as it crumbled in the final days of the Monday Night War, decided to jump to WWE, and his victory over Vicious was reversed by WCW officials. In an instant, Benoit went from the torchbearer in WCW, to an upstart who had to start from scratch in WWE. He climbed the ranks methodically, but in June 2001; Benoit suffered a career-threatening injury that sidelined him for 14 months.

Ever the survivor, Benoit rehabbed seven days a week and returned to the ring in the best shape of his career. Upon his return in August 2002, however, the WWE landscape had changed. After Brock Lesnar took the WWE Championship to *SmackDown!*, *Raw* general manager Eric Bischoff created the World Heavyweight Championship, meaning that just like the WCW days, there were two titles. Benoit, then a *SmackDown!* Superstar, was forced to chase the WWE Championship.

In 2003, the Crippler got back in his groove. However, just like WCW, he was blatantly singled out and had almost impossible obstacles placed before him. Paul Heyman—Benoit's former boss in ECW, and then-*SmackDown!* general manager—benched the Crippler and forced him be the first entrant in the *Royal Rumble*. The odds against him were never longer. Benoit would have to last more than one hour and survive an onslaught of 29 other Superstars to receive a title shot at *WrestleMania XX*.

The premise seemed impossible, but Benoit dug deep into his soul and

earned a watershed victory. However, instead of vying for *SmackDown!*'s biggest prize, the Crippler used a contract loophole to his advantage. Benoit, guaranteed a World title shot by virtue of his *Royal Rumble* victory, opted to jump to *Raw* and challenge for the World Heavyweight Championship instead. A few weeks later, Bischoff added Shawn Michaels to the main event, making it a Triple-Threat Match.

Benoit knew he was the clear underdog. His two opponents had a total of 12 World titles on their résumés. But presented with an opportunity of a lifetime, Benoit knew that this was his greatest chance to prove that he was "good enough." Benoit was about to meet two of WWE's biggest Superstars on the biggest stage in the history of the business—*WrestleMania XX*, held at the World's Most Famous Arena, Madison Square Garden.

After a brutal back-and-forth contest, Benoit made Triple H tap out to his patented Crippler Crossface to realize his dream of winning the World Heavyweight Championship. The tearful, confetti-filled celebration that followed signaled the dawning of a new era.

The Rabid Wolverine snapped and snarled through the spring and summer of 2004 and gained momentum, as

he defeated Superstars such as Kane, Batista and Ric Flair. But perhaps his biggest accomplishment was his mastery over Triple H time and time again, establishing himself as the one *Raw* Superstar whom "The Game" has never been able to defeat.

In April, the Crippler's defended his newly won prize at *Backlash* in his hometown of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, in a *WrestleMania XX* rematch. In the week prior to the event, Benoit received a hero's homecoming, including gifts from the city's mayor and a day named in his honor. And then, like a storybook ending, Benoit repeated history—only this time by making the Heartbreak Kid tap out—to retain his title.

At *Vengeance* in July, Benoit met Triple H again, this time in a one-on-one showdown for the World Heavyweight Championship. Despite coming very close to defeat, he retained the title with a little help from his friend, Eugene. The controversial ending led to a high-profile rematch on *Raw* two weeks later, where Benoit met Triple

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H in an Iron Man Match. After a grueling hour of action, Benoit secured the victory, 4-3. No matter how hard "The Game" tried, he was unable to unseat the World Heavyweight Champion.

In August, Benoit defended his title against the one Evolution member he had yet to defeat—Randy Orton. And although he fought off his challenger with everything he had, *SummerSlam* wasn't Benoit's night. The "Legend Killer" ended the Crippler's five-month reign with a lightning-quick RKO. The following night, he received an instant rematch, but after interference from Evolution, the end result was the same. Benoit's dream was over, and he was forced to regroup.

The Crippler's next chance for gold came at the fan-interactive *Taboo Tuesday*, where he was one of the three possible contenders for a shot at Triple H's World Championship. The fans voted for HBK to battle Triple H, which left Benoit and Edge to vie for the World Tag Team titles instead. In a shocking turn of events, Edge walked out on Benoit midway through the contest and left him to fend for himself. Despite this handicap, the Wolverine defeated La Résistance for the World Tag Team titles.

A few weeks later, in a rematch, Edge distracted the referee, and allowed La Résistance to regain the titles. Following the loss, Edge brutally attacked Benoit, and left him lying in a pool of his own blood.

All this did was infuriate the Rabid Wolverine. Benoit mercilessly pursued his attacker, until he finally evened the score. As the year came to a close, the Crippler was back in the World title hunt, hoping to relive those memorable five months where he sat at the top of the mountain.

In 2004, the Crippler overcame all odds. He defied logic by outlasting 29 WWE Superstars, proved all the critics wrong at *WrestleMania XX*, and established himself as the one Superstar who figured out how to defeat "The Game." He held the World Heavyweight Championship for almost half the year, and served notice that 2004 was the greatest 12 months of Chris Benoit's illustrious career. That's why Chris Benoit is the 2004 *Raw* Superstar of the Year.

— Anthony Cali

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SmackDown! Magazine Presents... *SmackDown!*'s 2004 Superstar of the Year:

JOHN 'BRADSHAW'

If you had told anyone just a few years ago that Bradshaw would one day be the *SmackDown!* Superstar of the Year, they might not have believed you. That's no knock on John Layfield, as much as it is a tribute to the focus that has occupied the vast majority of his WWE career: tag-team competition. Even during those rare periods when he pursued singles glory, Bradshaw chased titles like the Intercontinental and European Championships. But the WWE Championship? A long shot.

That is, until 2004. This was the year that John "Bradshaw" Layfield stepped up his game. This was the year he became the most dominant force on *SmackDown!*, if not in all of WWE. It's a long time coming, and leave it to the tough-as-nails Bradshaw to hit the mark so squarely this year that the choice is crystal clear.

JBL spent almost the entire second half of 2004 holding the richest prize in sports-entertainment, the WWE Championship. At the beginning of the year, he was still a member of the APA, the tag team he had formed with Ron "Faarooq" Simmons and been part of for more than half a decade. Never in anyone's wildest imagination could the path he was about to take have been foreseen.

LAYFIELD

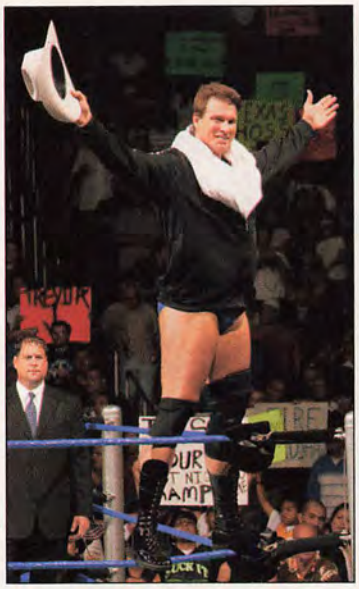
Faarooq's dismissal from WWE by then-*SmackDown!* general manager Paul Heyman in May was, in retrospect, the greatest thing to ever happen to Bradshaw. The following week, without missing a beat, the Texas roughneck showed up on *SmackDown!* looking like no one had ever seen him before. Gone were the beer and cigars, the barroom brawling and casual attire. Now decked out in a full suit and cowboy hat, riding a white limousine and singing the praises of his new hometown—New York, New York—he had become an entirely different WWE Superstar. One who would settle for nothing but being the best. JBL was born.

Finding himself on his own lit a fire under JBL that forced him to reinvent himself. He took those nine years of WWE experience he had under his belt

and put them to the best use possible. He took direct aim at the man who sat at the very top of the *SmackDown!* totem pole—WWE Champion Eddie Guerrero. "Latino Heat's" road to glory was so impressive in its own right that no one predicted him losing the title any time soon. When JBL first challenged him for the gold, he was not taken entirely seriously. That is, until *Judgment Day*.

The first JBL/Guerrero match opened up a lot of eyes. Layfield erased a lot of doubts once that blood-soaked night was over. Although Eddie escaped with his championship intact, JBL made sure he knew he had been in the fight of his life. Now the fans knew he was for real. When it came time for their rematch the following month at *The Great American Bash*, the world was watching. And JBL delivered.

The bout was a Texas Bullrope Match, one of Layfield's specialties. And although he needed to resort to shady methods to get the job done, in the end, he was the competitor able to tag all four turnbuckles while tied to his opponent, thus signaling the end of the match and the beginning of the JBL Era on *SmackDown!* Just like that, the prestigious gold once held by Sammartino, Hogan, Hart and The Rock was now in his possession. If the world was shocked by that one, then surely no one could have seen what was to follow throughout the summer.



JBL had risen from mid-card status to best of the best, but things were only just getting started. He then raised the ire of Undertaker. *SmackDown!*'s most respected veteran and resident WWE legend. You can't expect to get too far in WWE without the Dead Man

knocking on your door, and this time it was JBL's turn to pay the piper. His number seemed all but up, and yet somehow, some way, he always managed to stay one step ahead of his intimidating foe.

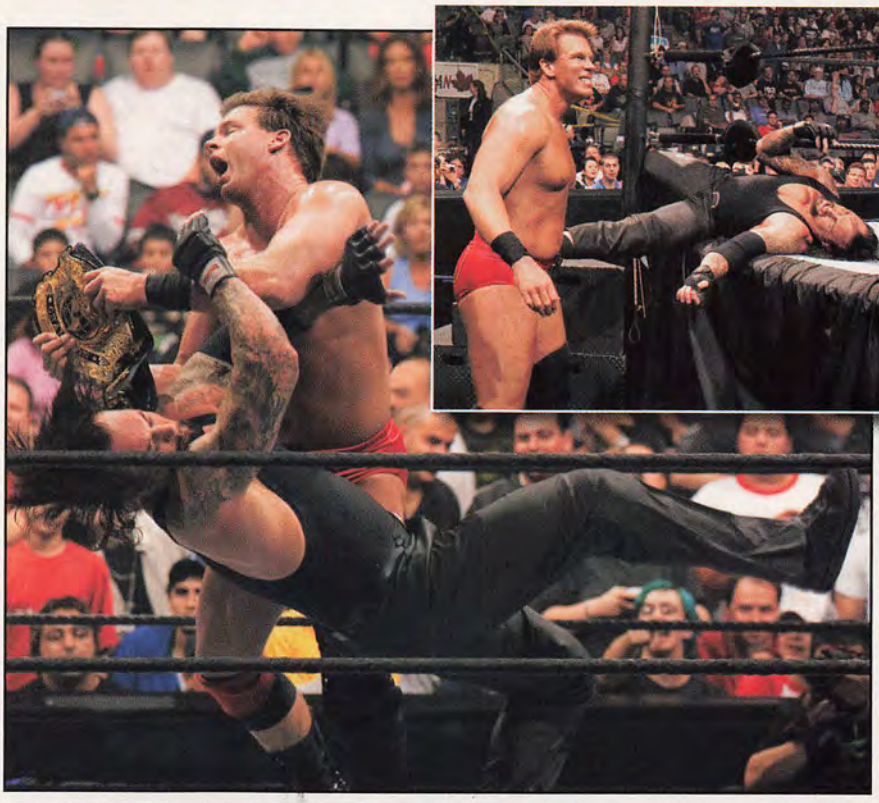
At *SummerSlam*, he survived a savage onslaught at the hands of 'Taker, eventually coming out on top only when Undertaker was disqualified after he bashed JBL with the championship belt. After escaping that debacle by the skin of his teeth, JBL had to take on the No. 1 contender once again in a Last Ride Match at *No Mercy*. This time, it was the maniacal Heidenreich who lent an assist, helping JBL wear down Undertaker enough to load him into a ringside hearse and emerge victorious.

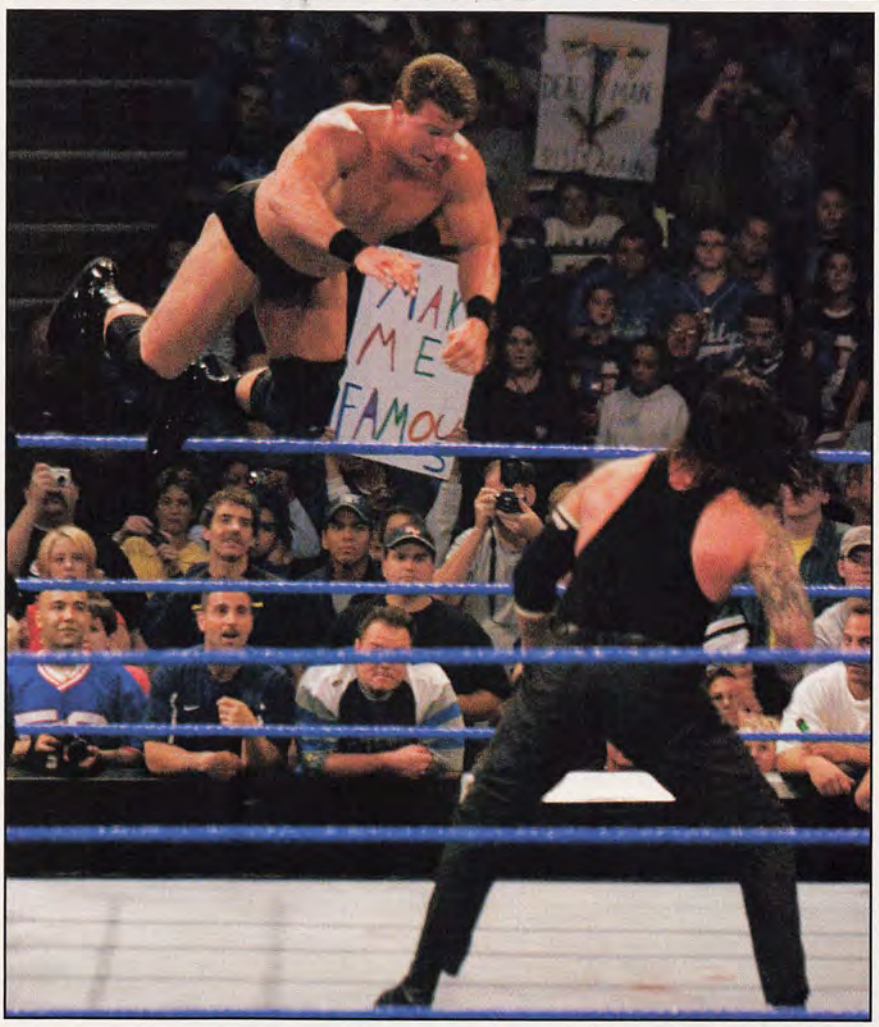
By hook or by crook, JBL remained WWE Champion, month after month. You can dispute his methods, but not his results. And despite his often questionable tactics, it takes a lot more than the ability to bend a few rules to remain in the driver's seat for as long as JBL. Much like with great World Champions such as Buddy Rogers, Harley Race, "Superstar" Billy Graham, Nick Bockwinkel and Ric Flair, cheating only gets you so far. You won't be around for long unless you can back it up with skill, determination and experience. John "Bradshaw" Layfield has done just that.

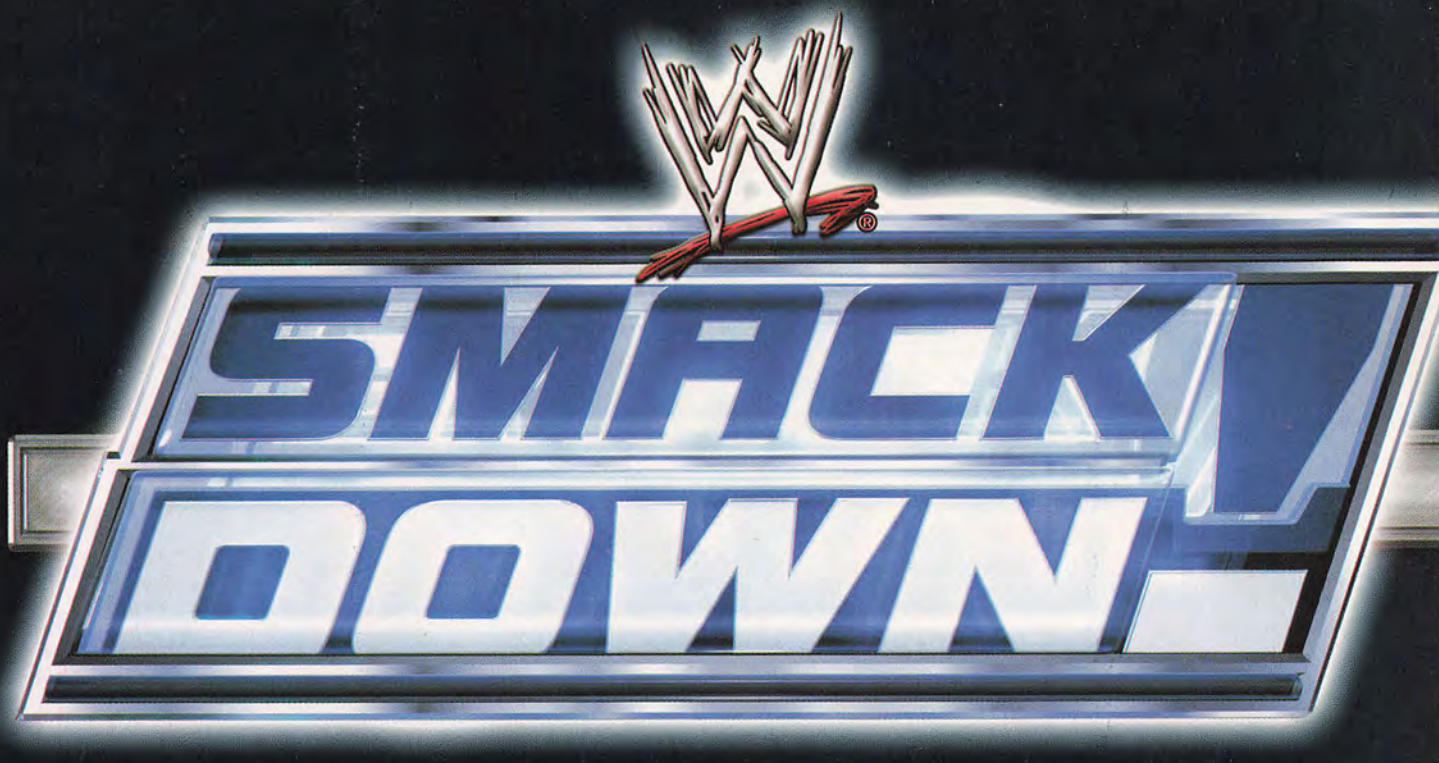
Not since Andre the Giant has a WWE Superstar labored for so long on the roster before finally winning the top prize, yet, for JBL, the achievement of that goal has to have been worth every minute of those nine years. Despite being the most hated Superstar on *SmackDown!*, as well as its most successful, deep down in the hearts of most fans, there is surely a kernel of respect for JBL and what he has accomplished.

Not since Shawn Michaels' legendary first title reign of 1996 did an individual hold the WWE Championship this long. JBL has silenced all the doubters, going from a challenger no one knew what to make of, to a champion whose dominance cannot be dismissed. Whether you love him or hate him, John "Bradshaw" Layfield is the *SmackDown!* 2004 Superstar of the Year.

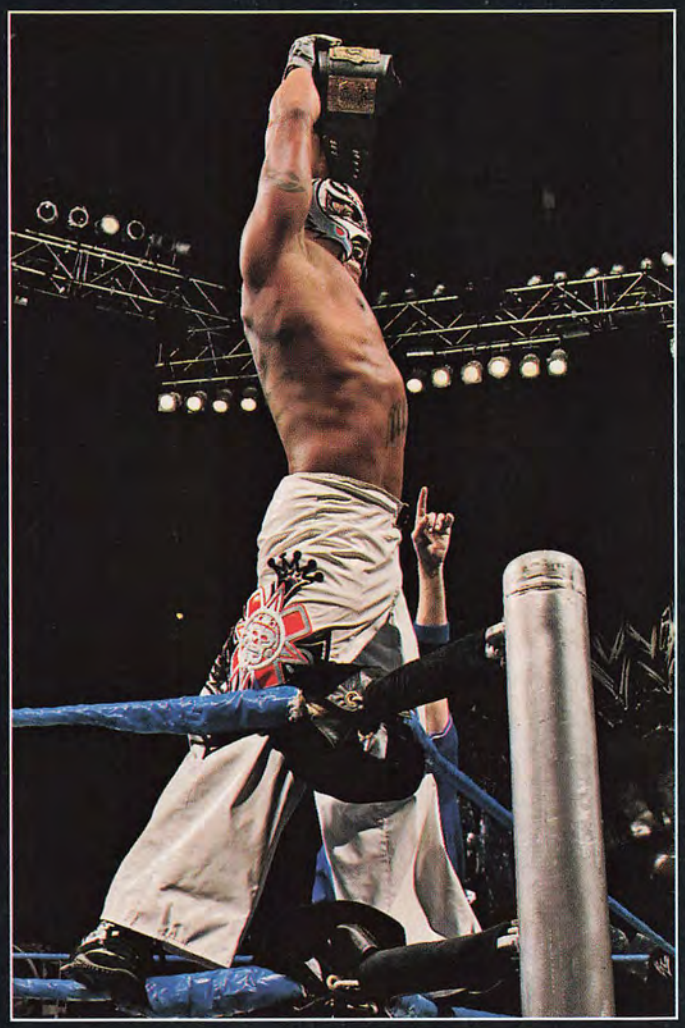
— Brian Solomon







It was the year that saw *SmackDown!* celebrate its fifth anniversary. The year of Kurt Angle and Theodore Long occupying the G.M. position. The year of Chavo Classic. The year of John "Bradshaw" Layfield, WWE Champion. In 2004, *SmackDown!* provided fans with 52 weeks of thrills, surprises, laughs and horrors. We tried our best to cram the most memorable highlights of those 52 weeks. We hope you enjoy reliving the year that gave us the $1,000,000 Tough Enough Challenge, the Bald Show, and Brock Lesnar in a sombrero…



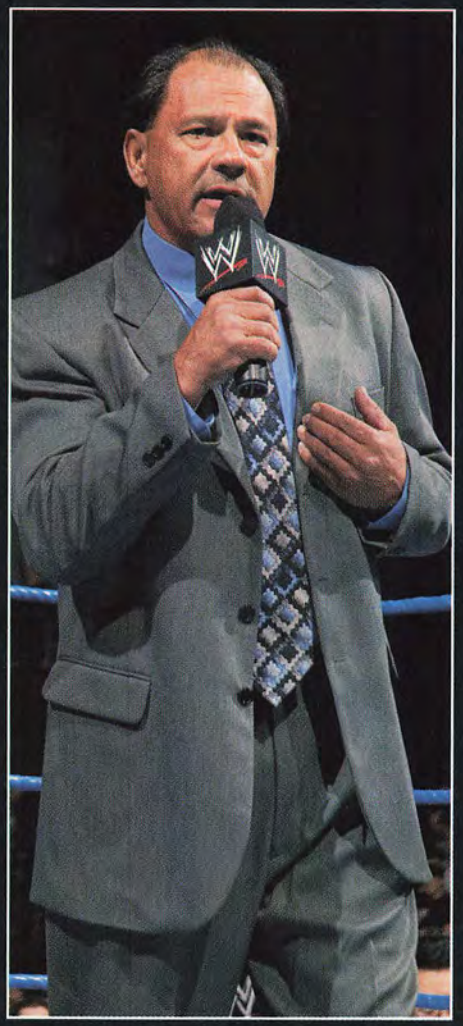
New Year, New Champ

Rey Mysterio made sure 2004 got kicked off the right way, as he took back the Cruiserweight Championship from Tajiri on the New Year's Day edition of *SmackDown!* It marked the seventh time Mysterio had held the prestigious title. He first won it from Dean Malenko back in 1996, when it was recognized by WCW. In June, Mysterio would duplicate the feat, setting the all-time record for most Cruiserweight titles.

2004: Year In Review

Simply Classic

Chavo Classic. The man, the myth, the legend. In 2004, Chavo Guerrero recruited his father to *SmackDown!* to watch his back. A legendary competitor of the 1970s, Chavo Guerrero Sr. (a.k.a. "Classic") competed throughout Mexico, was a major star in the Los Angeles area, and even appeared at WWE's August 1980 *Showdown at Shea*, where he faced Tatsumi Fujinami. Classic proved to be quite the ladies man, and even enjoyed a brief return to the ring in 2004.



Dances with Titles

Years removed from their Too Cool glory days, Rikishi & Scotty 2 Hotty again joined forces to prove that they could still get it done, and do a little strutting afterward. On *SmackDown!* from Cleveland, they bested the Basham Brothers to win the WWE Tag Team titles. Scotty had previously held tag team gold with Grandmaster Sexay, and Rikishi shared a title run with Rico, but this was their first reign together.

Bandolero Brock

In the days leading up to his *No Way Out* confrontation with Eddie Guerrero, WWE Champion Brock Lesnar saw fit to desecrate Guerrero's

heritage. Lesnar sauntered to the ring in a sombrero, accompanied by a full mariachi band. Little did Lesnar know the laugh was on him, because "Latino Heat" would soon relieve him of his title.

A Stone Cold *SmackDown!*

Ever since the brand extension of 2002, Stone Cold had stayed away from *SmackDown!*, yet as *WrestleMania XX* approached, he saw fit to make a special appearance. The entire locker room seemed to empty out as general manager Paul Heyman tried to stop Stone Cold from getting his hands on Brock Lesnar, but no one could stop the Rattlesnake. Heyman received a Stunner, and Stone Cold drank some beers before returning home to *Raw*.

Damn!

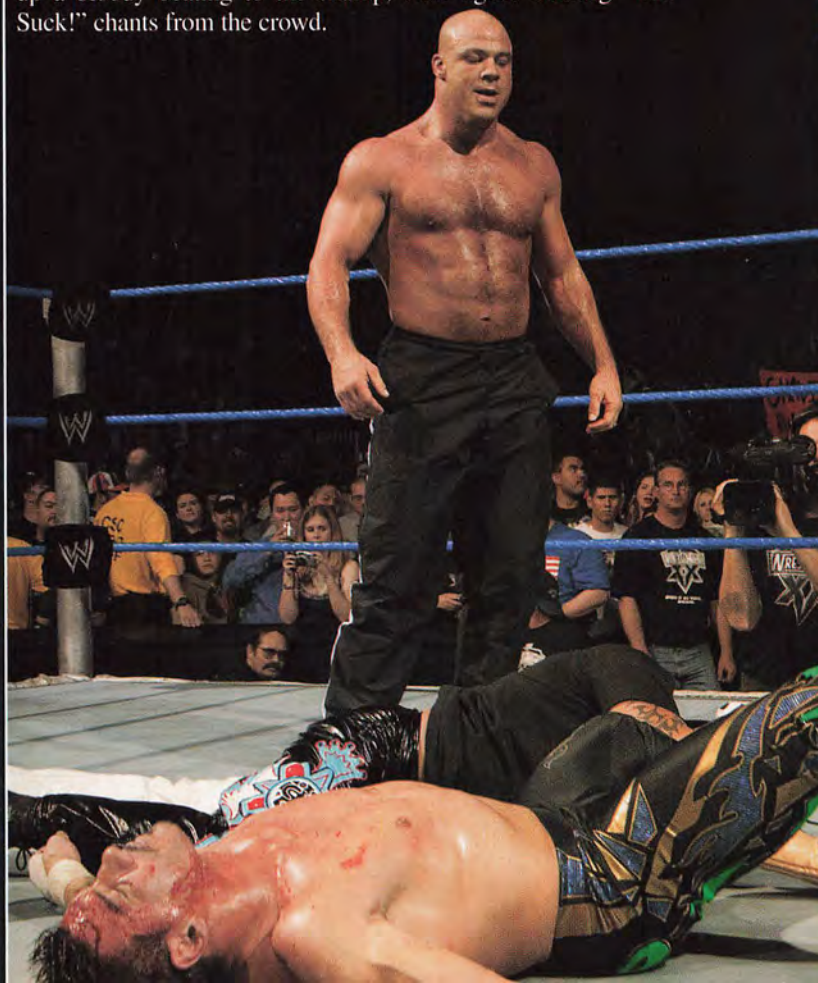
Since 1998, the APA had been a fixture of WWE television, kicking ass and taking names like no one else. Yet, when Paul Heyman saw fit to fire Ron "Faarooq" Simmons, his long-time partner Bradshaw chose not to follow him out the door. WWE's longest-running tag team was no more. But another era was just about to start…

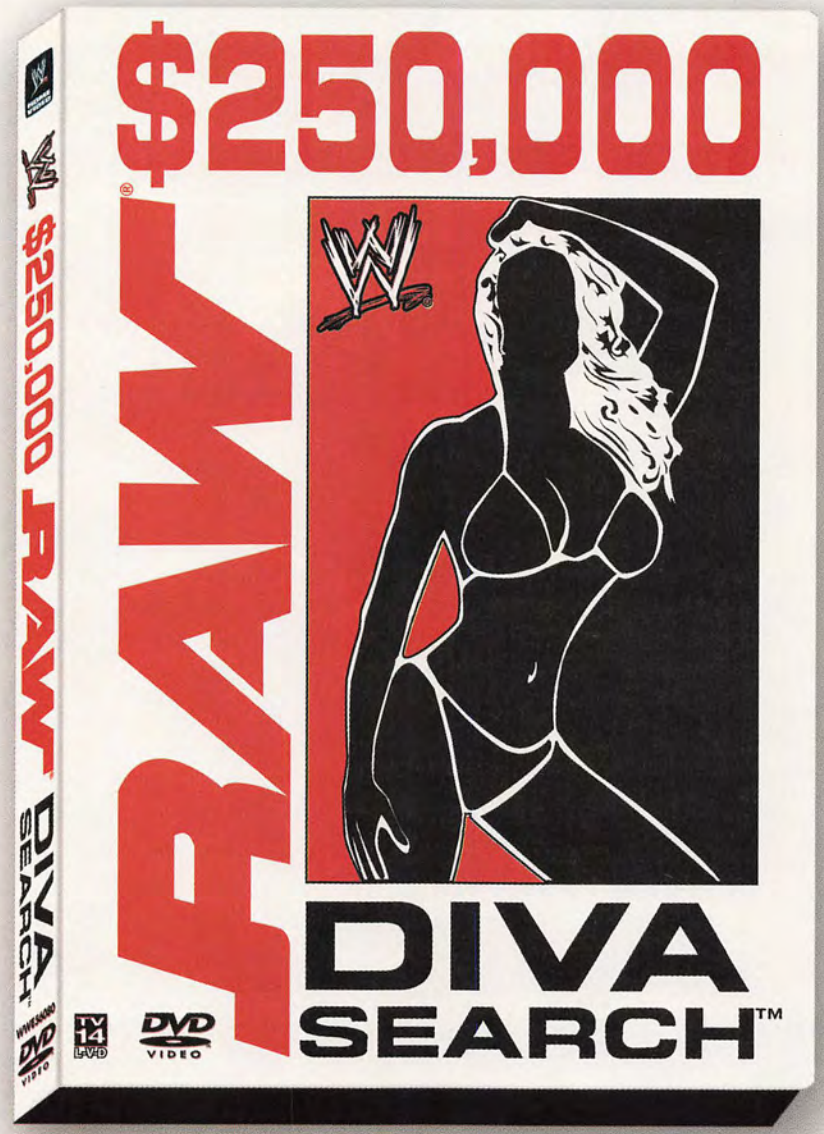
Urban Cowboy

Perhaps 2004's most amazing *SmackDown!* story was the emergence of John "Bradshaw" Layfield as *the* force to be reckoned with on the Thursday night franchise. On the heels of the APA breakup, Bradshaw reinvented himself, captured the WWE Championship soon after, and the sports-entertainment landscape has not been the same since.

Angle's Treachery

We should have known that Kurt Angle would not be able to wait until *WrestleMania*. His need to become WWE Champion once again caused him to turn against a man he had once considered an ally—Eddie Guerrero. During Eddie's title defense against his nephew, Chavo, Angle, who served as special referee, showed his true intentions. He shocked the world when he served up a bloody beating to the champ, once again drawing "You Suck!" chants from the crowd.





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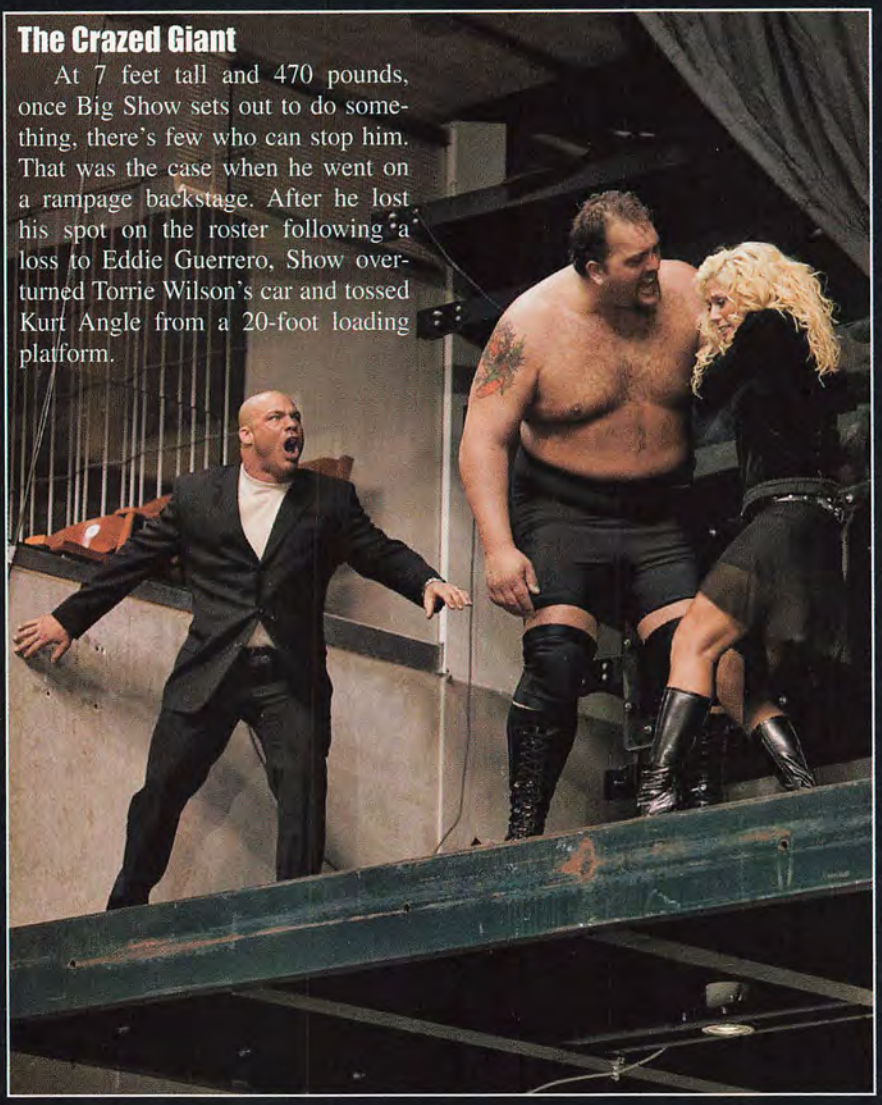
The Crazed Giant

At 7 feet tall and 470 pounds, once Big Show sets out to do something, there's few who can stop him. That was the case when he went on a rampage backstage. After he lost his spot on the roster following a loss to Eddie Guerrero, Show overturned Torrie Wilson's car and tossed Kurt Angle from a 20-foot loading platform.



A G.M. with Three "I's"

After Paul Heyman lost his spot as *SmackDown!* general manager in the wake of the Draft Lottery, many were surprised that the position was passed to Kurt Angle. It proved convenient, since Angle spent the majority of his tenure as G.M. in a wheelchair due to injuries received at the hands of Big Show.

Chavo Loses to a Girl

As Cruiserweight Champion, Chavo Guerrero was riding high—that is, until he lost his title to Jacqueline. In beating Chavo, the Diva became the first woman to ever hold the WWE Cruiserweight title—a fact she made sure to emphasize to Chavo. This defeat would mark the beginning of the rift between Chavo and his dad, Chavo Classic.

Father Knows Best

After regaining the Cruiserweight title, Chavo was once again a happy man. Little did he know that the man he would lose it to next would be his own dad, Chavo Classic! In a Triple-Threat Match that also involved Spike Dudley, Classic was accidentally knocked on top of his son by Spike. Classic allegedly tried to get up, but three seconds later, he found himself the new Cruiserweight Champion.

Those Damn Dudleys

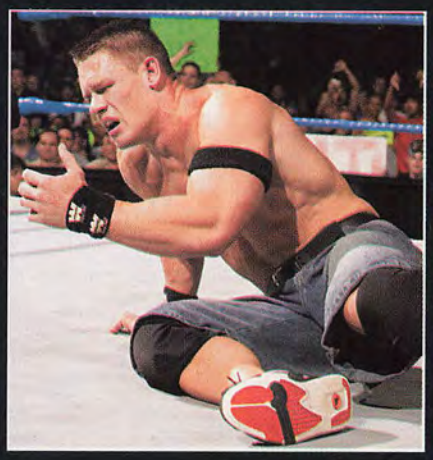
For years, the enemies of Undertaker would steal his urn whenever they wanted to attempt to weaken him. Never before had anyone tried to actually steal his manager, Paul Bearer. But the Dudleys did just that, as they loaded him into the trunk of a car and delivered him to the nefarious Paul Heyman. But they never expected that in the end, 'Taker would be even more cold-blooded toward Bearer than they were.

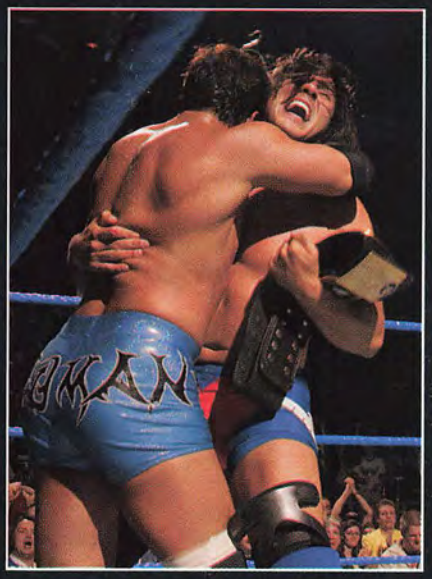
Eighteen and Counting

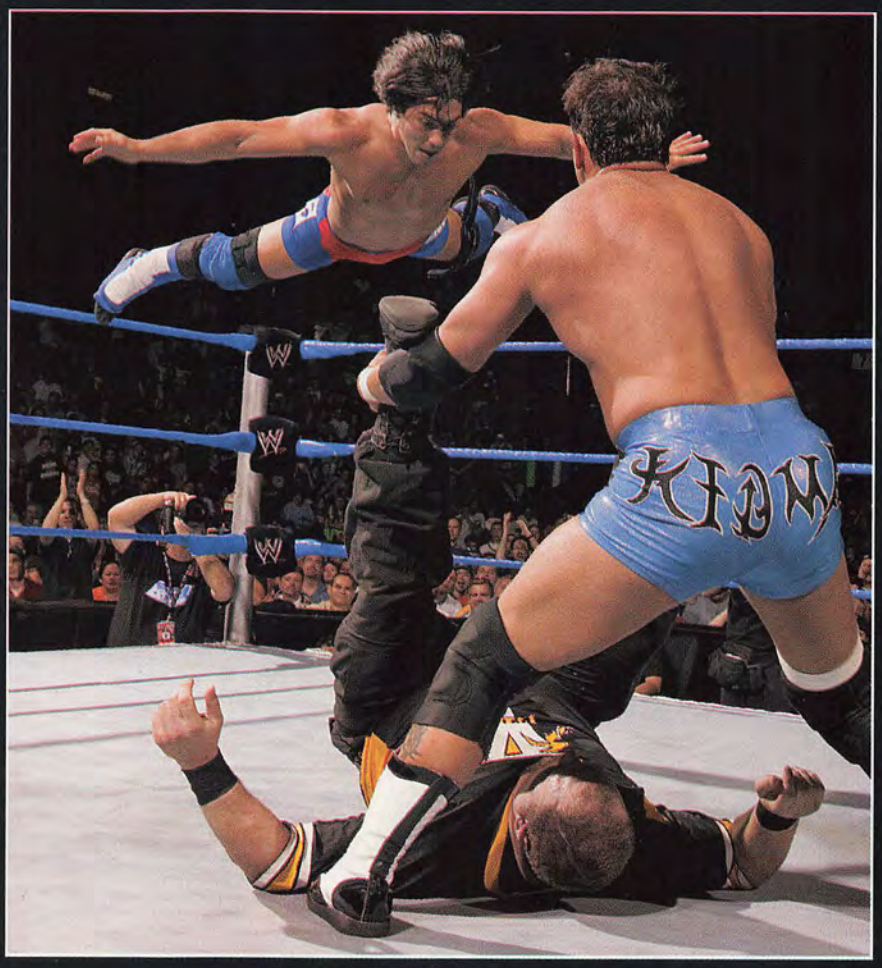
For those who weren't sure whether the Dudley Boyz are the greatest tag team of all time, the duo made it harder than ever to disagree. That's because they won the WWE Tag Team Championship, which, added to their eight ECW titles, eight World Tag titles on *Raw*, and one WCW title, brings their total to 18 tag team titles. Now, that's a record that's likely to stand for a long time—unless they break it themselves.

The Doctor is Out!

Since coming out of *WrestleMania XX* as United States Champion, it seemed John Cena was destined for a long, successful title reign. For three months, he turned back every challenge. But when he crossed paths with Kurt Angle, the G.M. found an excuse to strip the Doctor of Thuganomics of his prized possession, and he vacated the U.S. title.

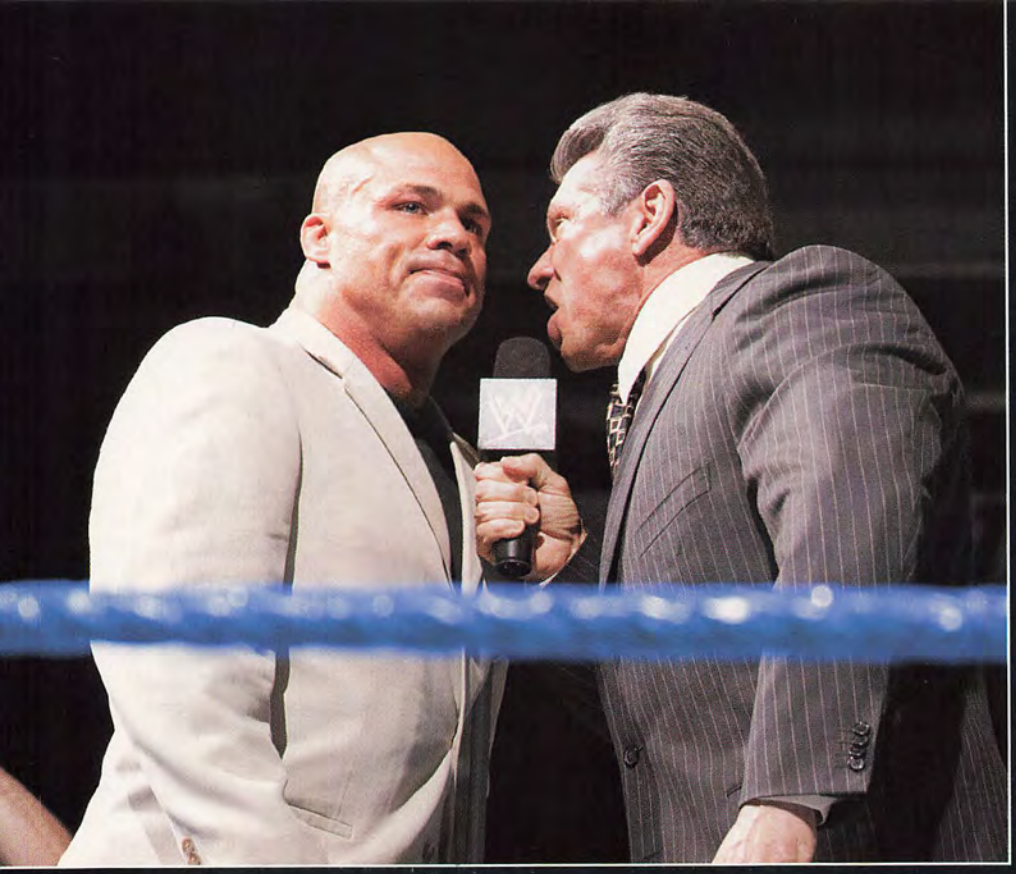






From Out of Nowhere

It was the upset of the year. Until July 8, the team of Billy Kidman & Paul London had not been taken seriously. In fact, they had rarely appeared on *SmackDown!* before their matchup against the WWE Tag Team Champions, the Dudley Boyz. But against all odds, the two high-flyers pulled off a remarkable upset, going from underrated tandem to the top of the heap in the blink of an eye.



"You're Fired!"

Kurt Angle probably never thought he'd hear the phrase that Vince McMahon made famous, but when he chose to sabotage Eddie Guerrero's chance to regain the WWE Championship, he went too far. Hiding under a mask as "El Gran Luchadore" wasn't enough to save him. Eventually, the boss caught up with him, and he lost his job as general manager.

Dig the Champ, Sucka

When John Cena was stripped of the United States title, an elimination match was signed featuring eight of *SmackDown!'s* top Superstars to determine who the new champion would be. Cena was included, but was unable to come out on top. This time, it was Booker T who won the day, as he recaptured the title he had last won when it was recognized by WCW.

Holla, Holla, Holla!

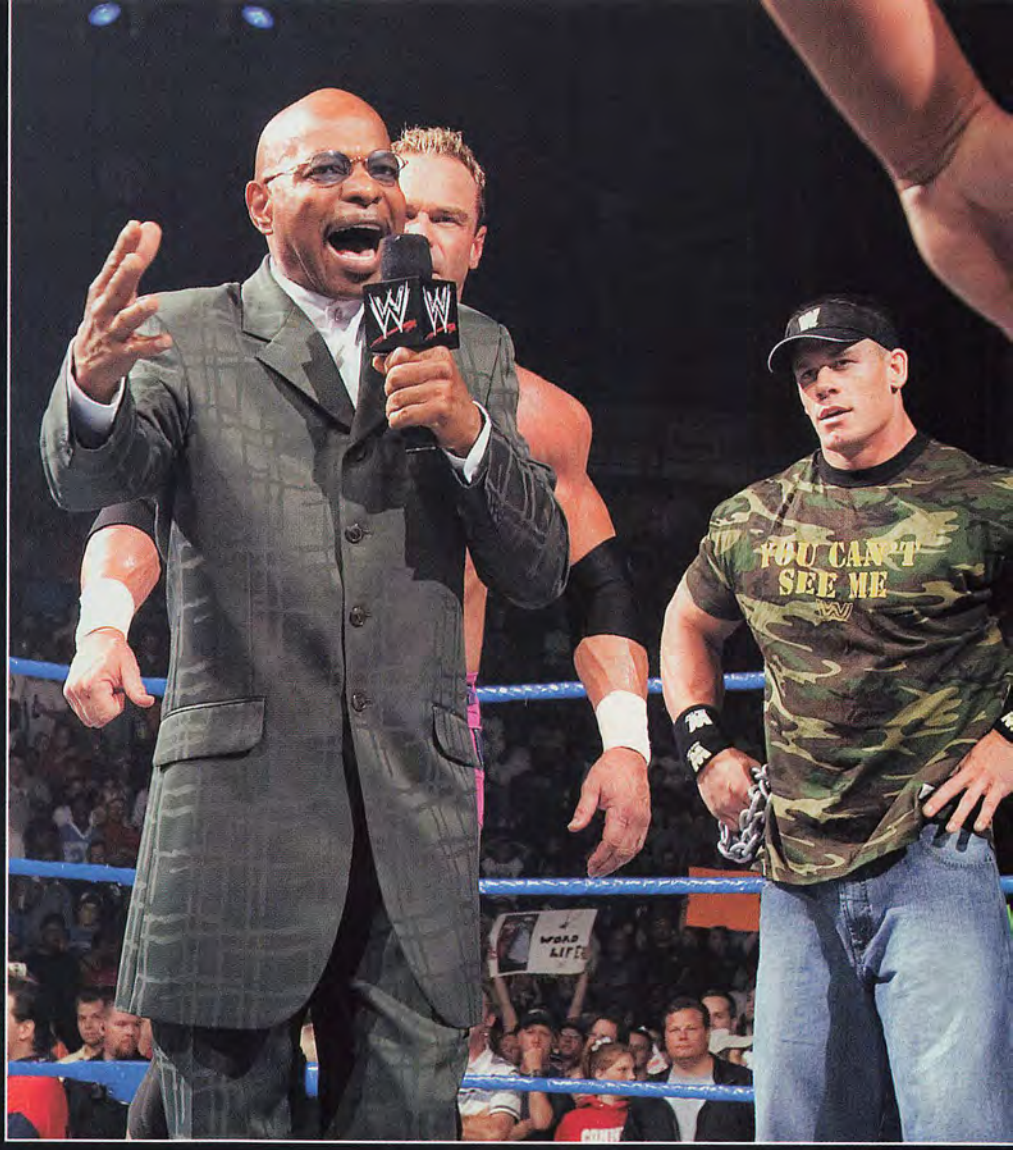
Replacing Angle as *SmackDown!* G.M. was former referee and manager Theodore Long. The new man in charge took to the G.M. position with ease, gaining more popularity with the fans than any G.M. before him. It's hard to hate on Teddy.

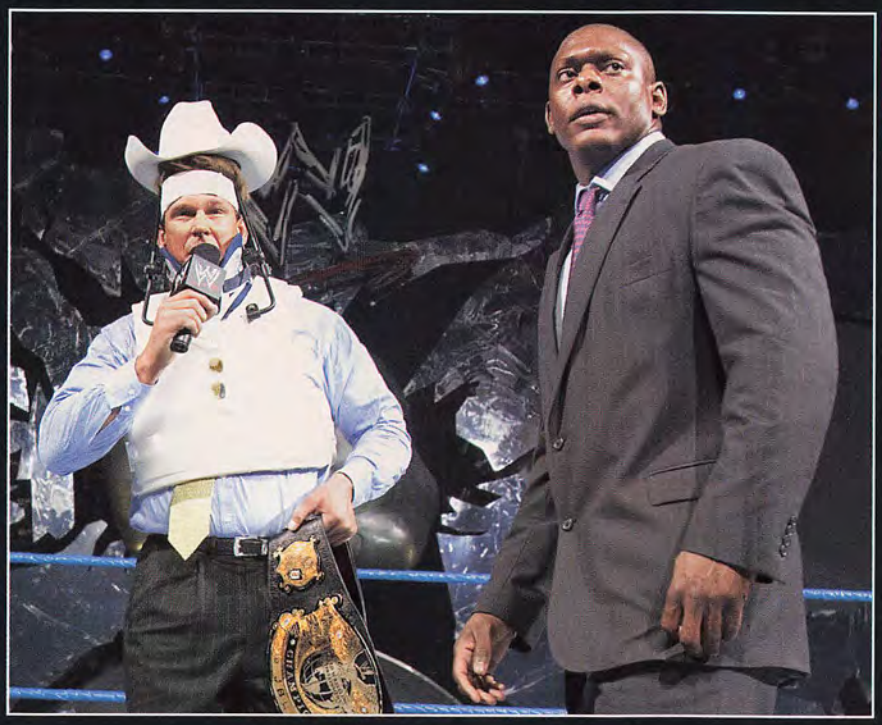
Kidman the Crippler

In one of 2004's most frightening moments, Billy Kidman nearly ended the career of Chavo Guerrero during a one-on-one encounter. Using his devastating Shooting Star Press, Kidman drove his knee into Chavo's skull, causing a severe concussion as well as other related injuries. Guerrero missed several months of action, but Kidman showed little remorse, as he continued to use the maneuver to hurt his opponents.

Happy Anniversary

It's hard to believe it's been five years since the landmark 1999 broadcast that started it all, bringing *SmackDown!* into homes every Thursday night on UPN. In September, *SmackDown!* celebrated its fifth anniversary in style. The season premiere featured highlights from previous shows, and had interviews with some of its top Superstars over the years, including Stone Cold and Hollywood Hogan.



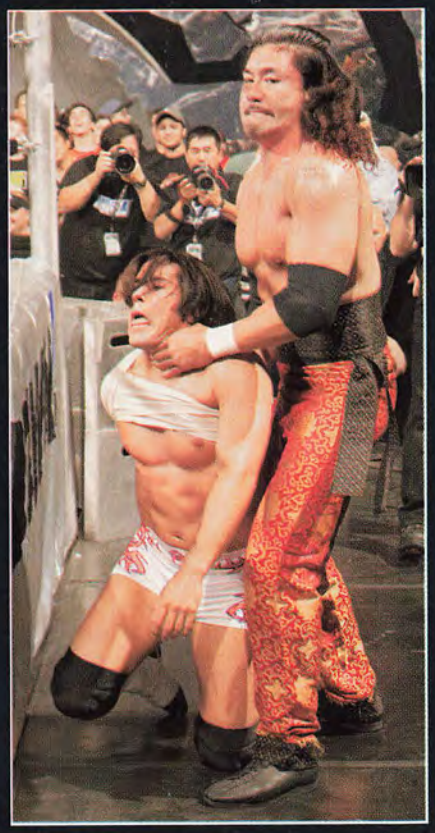


Chief of Staff

Every person of power needs a flunky, it seems, and WWE Champion John "Bradshaw" Layfield has certainly found one in Orlando Jordan. After he saved Layfield from a beating at the hands of Undertaker, Jordan found himself named to the enviable position of the champ's Chief of Staff. You've got to hand it to Jordan, as he seized the moment and became one of the highest-profile Superstars on *SmackDown!*

The Little Boss

In 2004, Spike Dudley went over the edge, going from lovable underdog to tyrannical overlord of the Dudley clan. He solidified his claim as top dog when he won the Cruiserweight Championship from perhaps its greatest holder ever, Rey Mysterio.



Odd Couple

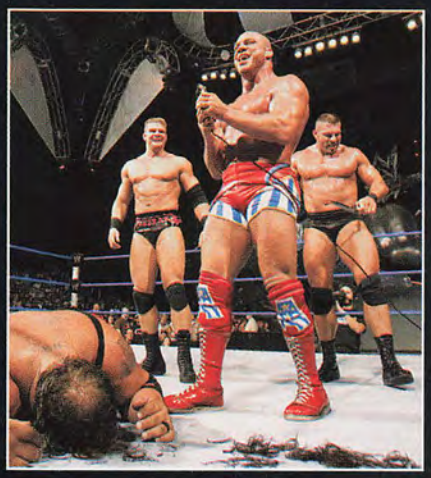
The only thing they seemed to have in common was a hatred of America. René Duprée is a French pretty boy. Kenzo Suzuki is a Japanese monster. Yet, they managed to pool their abilities successfully in a WWE Tag Team title match with Billy Kidman & Paul London. Perhaps it was the dissension between London & Kidman, but whatever the case, Duprée & Suzuki became the most unlikely tag champs since Stone Cold & Dude Love.

Now That's Cool

In perhaps the greatest debut in WWE history, second-generation Superstar Carlito dethroned John Cena for the United States Championship in his very first match on *SmackDown!* The much-heralded competitor simply oozed confidence as he first emerged before the crowd, and he backed it up by taking Cena's newly won championship after hitting the "Doctor of Thuganomics" with his own chain.

Well, It's the Bald Show!

In a scene reminiscent of Ken Patera and Big John Studd's 1984 assault of Andre the Giant, Big Show suffered the ultimate indignity when Kurt Angle, Luther Reigns & Mark Jindrak shaved his head bald. After he first subdued the giant with a tranquilizer dart, Angle took pleasure as he sheared Show's cranium clean.

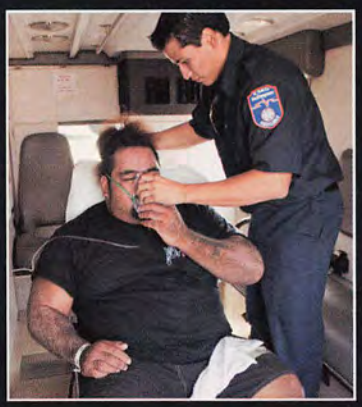


Jolly Good Show

For the first time ever, *SmackDown!* presented a special broadcast from the United Kingdom in October. Fans in the UK got to witness JBL defend the WWE Championship against Hardcore Holly in a Hardcore Match. Big Show come after Kurt Angle in search of payback for shaving his head, and were the first to hear the news of John Cena getting stabbed in a Boston nightclub.

The Return of *Tough Enough*

After three successful seasons on MTV, *Tough Enough* returned in 2004. But, this time, all the rules had changed. This time, the contestants would appear each week on *SmackDown!* to compete in grueling contests. This time, the fans would choose who got voted off. And this time, the winner would receive a whopping $1,000,000 contract with WWE.



Please Make It Stop

When the *Tough Enough* contestants heard they'd compete in Torrie Wilson's "Sex Test," they were probably pretty excited. That excitement came to an abrupt halt when they discovered that the contest entailed a tryst with Mae Young. After that, they were probably wondering if it was worth the $1 million.

The Champ Is Back! Or Is He?

After recovering from his puncture wounds, John Cena returned to *SmackDown!* to reclaim what he believed he had never lost—the United States Championship. The night turned out to be bittersweet for Cena, who managed to regain the U.S. title from Carlito, but nevertheless had his career put in serious jeopardy by a sadistic post-match assault from Carlito's bodyguard, Jesus. The burly henchman targeted Cena's kidney, which is exactly where he had suffered his wounds, and put the champ out of action again.

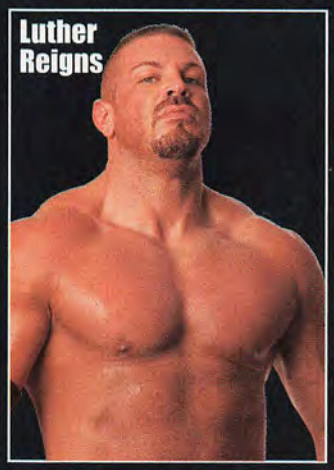
Flying High

Mere days before their title shot at *Armageddon*, Rob Van Dam & Rey Mysterio surprised many by winning the WWE Tag Team titles from Kenzo Suzuki & René Duprée on *SmackDown!* The high-flying duo wound up going into the pay-per-view as the champions instead of the challengers. RVD had previously held Tag Team gold with both Kane and Booker T. Mysterio held the titles with Edge.

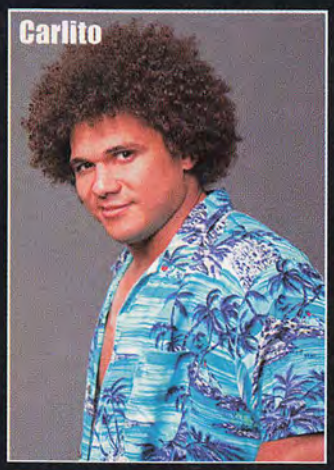
Tribute to the Troops

SmackDown! returned to the Middle East this year with another special holiday presentation. During the week of Christmas, the Superstars once again entertained the troops in Iraq. Much like last year's *Christmas from Baghdad* event, the show was a resounding success, and another example of WWE's continued support of our men and women in uniform. ■

New Blood: 2004's *SmackDown!* Newcomers


Luther Reigns

Kenzo Suzuki & Hiroko


Carlito

Jesus

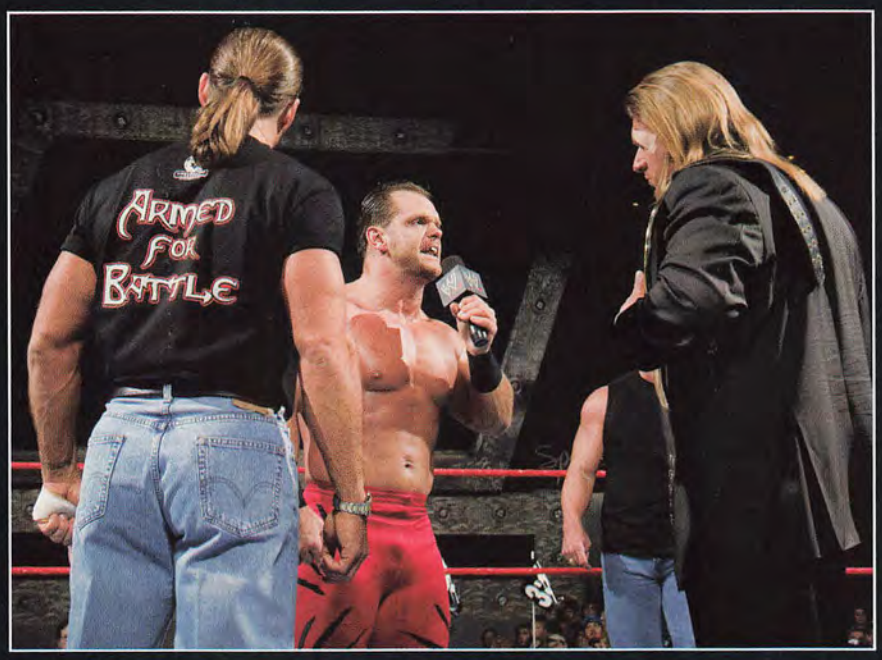
Heidenreich

Joy Giovanni

Michelle McCool

Amy Weber

When a show has been on the air for more than a decade, it's an ongoing challenge to keep things interesting while topping what has come before. In the case of *Raw*, that challenge was decidedly met in 2004, as the program experienced one of its most tumultuous and exciting years ever. It was the year Kane married Lita, the year WWE got shaken up by the Draft Lottery, the year the world fell in love with Eugene. With a year like that, it's clear that as *Raw* enters its 13th year, it's showing no signs of slowing down. Here are some of the memorable moments of 2004...



From Crippler to Defector

When Chris Benoit won the *Royal Rumble*, he was given a *WrestleMania* title shot. However, no one ever specified what title it would be. Benoit decided to take advantage of the open-ended clause, and shocked fans by making the jump from *SmackDown!* to *Raw* to challenge World Heavyweight Champion Triple H. He's been a part of *Raw* ever since.

Hardcore Coward?

At the start of 2004, Randy Orton embarked on an elaborate smear campaign against the beloved Mick Foley. Calling him out week after week, the "Legend Killer" even paid for anti-Foley spots to air on *Raw*. Foley finally confronted Orton in a memorable segment, highlighted by Orton having the audacity to spit in Mick's face.

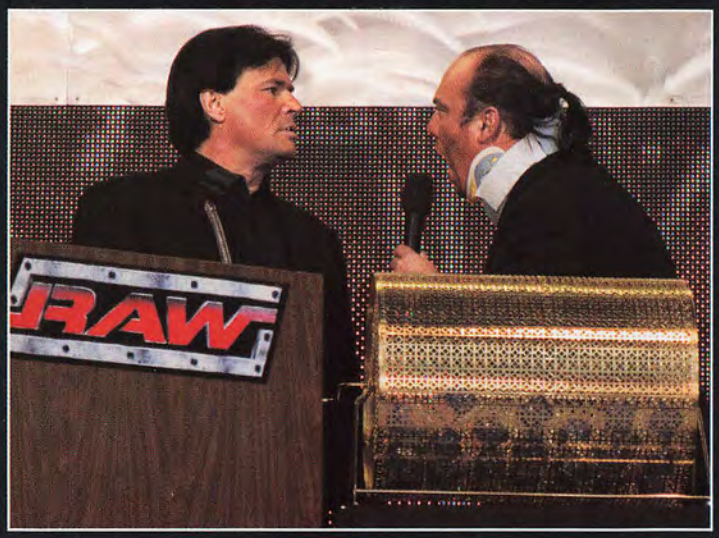
2004: Year In Review

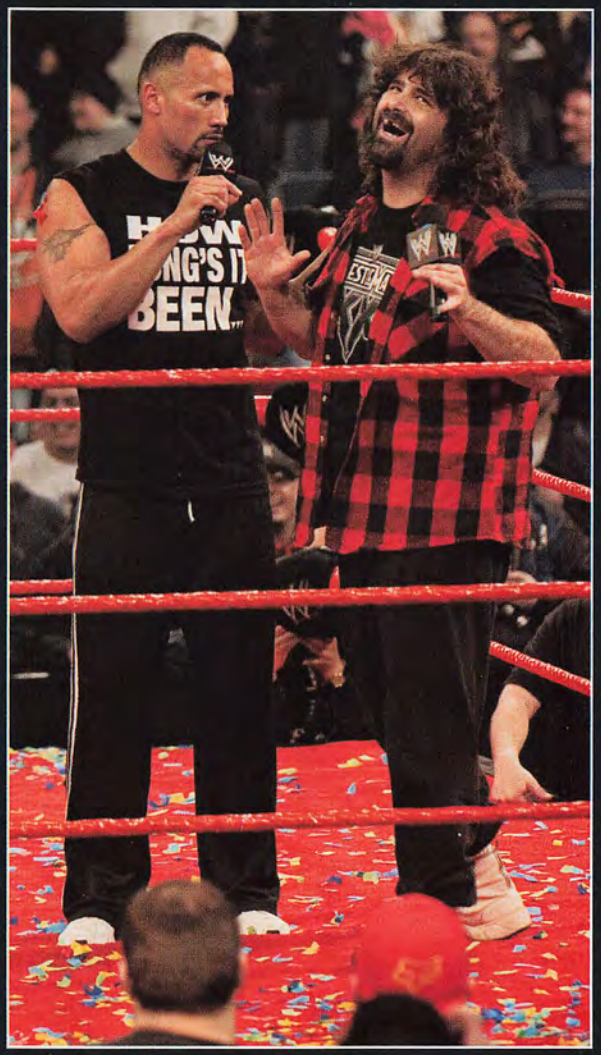
Finally...

When Mick Foley needed him, The Rock was there, returning to *Raw* to help his former tag-team partner in his battle with Evolution. In the weeks leading to *WrestleMania XX*, fans were treated to a reunion of The Rock 'n' Sock Connection, including The Rock's presentation of "Mick Foley: This Is Your Life," as a homage to Foley's similar tribute of him back in 1999.

The Draft

It was the night everything changed. Not since the original draft of 2002 had things been shaken up like this. *Raw* general manager Eric Bischoff and *SmackDown!* general manager Paul Heyman drew names from a hopper, and changed the lives of WWE Superstars forever. Booker T, the Dudley Boyz and others found themselves on *SmackDown!* Shelton Benjamin was among the former *SmackDown!* Superstars who became part of *Raw*.





Who's a Punk?

Raw's upset of the year had to be Shelton Benjamin's shocking defeat of Triple H. "The Game" did what he could to badmouth Benjamin, calling him a "young punk," but Benjamin had the last laugh with a rollup victory. The win instantly catapulted him to the upper echelon of WWE Superstars. As if that weren't enough, he duplicated the feat the following week.

Victoria Victorious

In February, Victoria defeated Jazz to win her second Women's Championship. Jazz had seemed about ready to settle in for a long and dominant reign after ending Molly Holly's nearly six-month run with the title, but Victoria decided it was time for a new queen.

More Gold for the "Nature Boy"

For the second time in three months, Evolution's Batista & Ric Flair formally joined forces in the ring to win the World Tag Team titles. With 16 World Championships, six United States titles and three NWA World Tag Team titles on his résumé, the legendary Flair now has two WWE Tag Team titles to add to the impressive catalog. For Batista, it marked the second title of his young WWE career, with many more sure to come.

His Name is Eugene

When Eric Bischoff ordered William Regal to look after his nephew, Regal never expected to meet an individual like Eugene. A WWE fan since childhood, the unique young man wanted nothing more than to be a WWE Superstar himself. And despite his unassuming appearance, Eugene wound up taking to the sport with amazing ease, becoming one of WWE's most popular competitors in the process.

Dream Team

Chris Benoit & Edge, two of *Raw*'s most adored Superstars (at the time), allied with each other in a concerted effort to win the World Tag Team titles in 2004. They would accomplish that goal, but it would be no cakewalk, as the titles were held at the time by two other top-flight competitors, Batista & Ric Flair. Although the Benoit/Edge tandem later imploded, for a brief time they represented a *Raw* fan's dream come true.

Battle in the Desert

They had never faced off one-on-one in a ring before, but on a special May *Raw* from Arizona, the new World Heavyweight Champion, Chris Benoit, got the chance to defend his title against four-time former champ Shawn Michaels. The matchup proved just as awesome as one would expect from two of the finest competitors of the past 25 years, but, in the end, it was the Crippler who walked away with his World Championship intact.

The Rock to the Rescue

When the innocent Eugene became the object of humiliation for the obnoxious Coach, The Rock took it upon himself to return to *Raw* and stand up for him. Needless to say, Eugene was more than thrilled, and he celebrated in the ring with the Great One, much to the delight of the crowd.

Vive La Résistance!

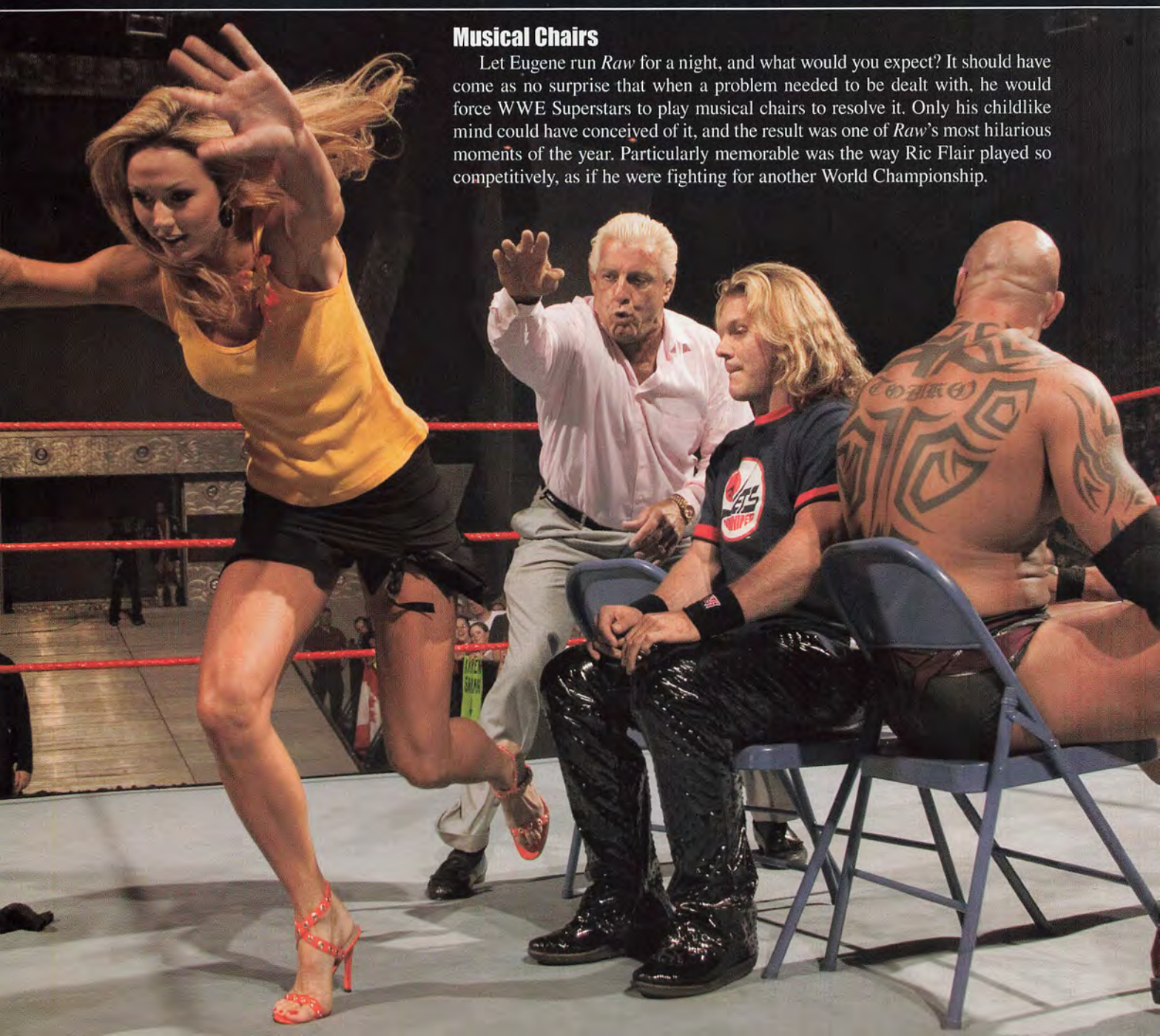
Sylvain Grenier & Rob Conway's victory for the World Tag Team titles in May was very impressive, especially since it took place in front of their fellow French-Canadians. But no one could have foreseen that the tag-team title reign of La Résistance would be the longest in WWE since Owen Hart & the British Bulldog eight years ago. You may dispute their tactics, but their success was impressive.

Totally Despicable

Evolution has been responsible for a lot of heinous deeds over the years, but perhaps none was worse than the way they took advantage of Eugene. Still not hardened by the dog-eat-dog environment of WWE, the wide-eyed youngster happily shared the ring with Triple H and his boys on an edition of *Chris Jericho's Highlight Reel*, unaware that he might be jumped at any minute. "The Game" tried to get Eugene on his side, and managed to manipulate him for several weeks before finally turning on him in violent fashion.

Seed of Kane

In all, 2004 had to be the worst year of Lita's life. She was blackmailed into sleeping with Kane, and soon discovered that she was carrying the spawn of the Big Red Monster. It was all to save her boyfriend, Matt Hardy, but resulted in one of the worst nightmares any WWE Diva has ever had to endure.



Musical Chairs

Let Eugene run *Raw* for a night, and what would you expect? It should have come as no surprise that when a problem needed to be dealt with, he would force WWE Superstars to play musical chairs to resolve it. Only his childlike mind could have conceived of it, and the result was one of *Raw*'s most hilarious moments of the year. Particularly memorable was the way Ric Flair played so competitively, as if he were fighting for another World Championship.

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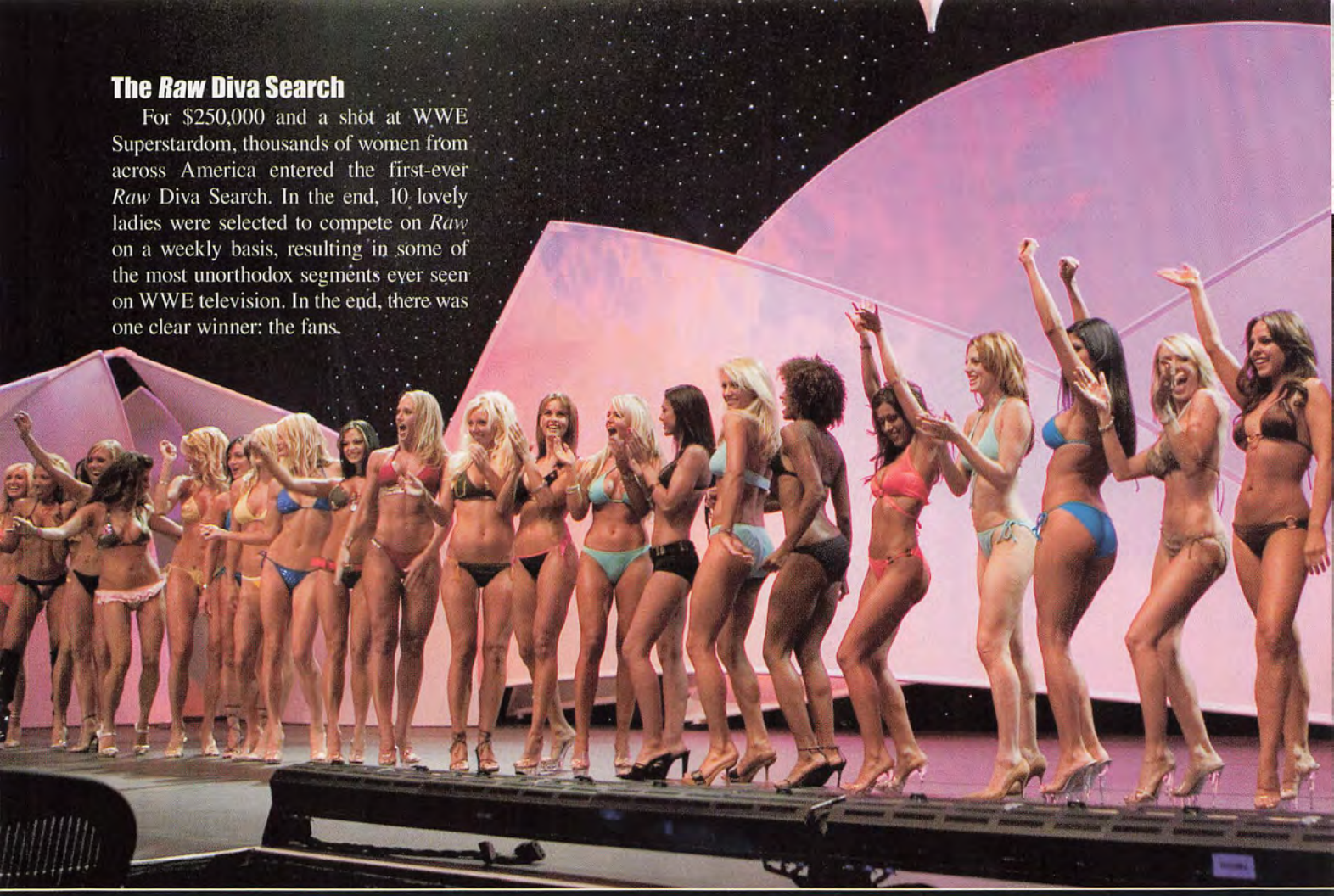
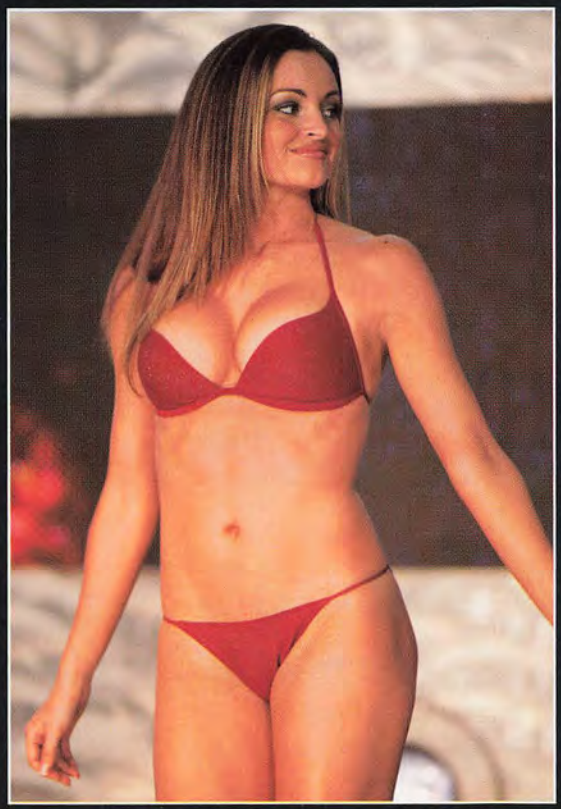
The *Raw* Diva Search

For $250,000 and a shot at WWE Superstardom, thousands of women from across America entered the first-ever *Raw* Diva Search. In the end, 10 lovely ladies were selected to compete on *Raw* on a weekly basis, resulting in some of the most unorthodox segments ever seen on WWE television. In the end, there was one clear winner: the fans.





Iron Men

Over the years, there has been one match that truly determined the toughest of the tough and separated the pretenders from the real thing. That is the Iron Man Match, and it was only a matter of time before Triple H and World Heavyweight Champion Chris Benoit locked horns to settle their score once and for all. For one full hour on *Raw,* they went head-to-head, and with a little help from Eugene, Benoit pulled off an impressive come-from-behind win, taking the match, four falls to three.

Everyone Hates Carmella

She may have been the *Playboy* Playmate of the Year, but Carmella DeCesare certainly didn't win any popularity contests during the Diva Search. During one particular installment, the other contestants took turns bad-mouthing her, revealing just how much animosity was going on behind the scenes.

Thumbs Down

One would imagine that when an Evolution member wins the World Heavyweight Championship, the entire faction would have cause to celebrate. But it turned out that's really only the case when Triple H wins the title. Randy Orton found this out the hard way; the night after he captured the crown from Benoit at *SummerSlam*, Triple H, Ric Flair & Batista viciously turned on him during their in-ring celebration, kicking him out of the group and destroying what should have been a crowning moment for the sport's youngest champion ever.

A Taste of Pie

Leave it to The Rock to come up with the most entertaining Diva Search segment of all. When the Brahma Bull returned yet again to *Raw*, he brought with him the idea of a Diva pie-eating contest. The Rock may be the greatest pie-eater of them all, but the Diva Search contestants still managed to give him a run for his money.

Party Crasher

Randy Orton never forgot the way Triple H ruined his moment in the sun and betrayed him when he won the World Heavyweight Championship from Chris Benoit. So after Triple H wrested the title away from him at *Unforgiven*, Orton made sure to return the favor in spades. During a triumphant Evolution celebration on *Raw* following Triple H's victory over Orton, Randy emerged from a giant cake and spoiled the festivities.

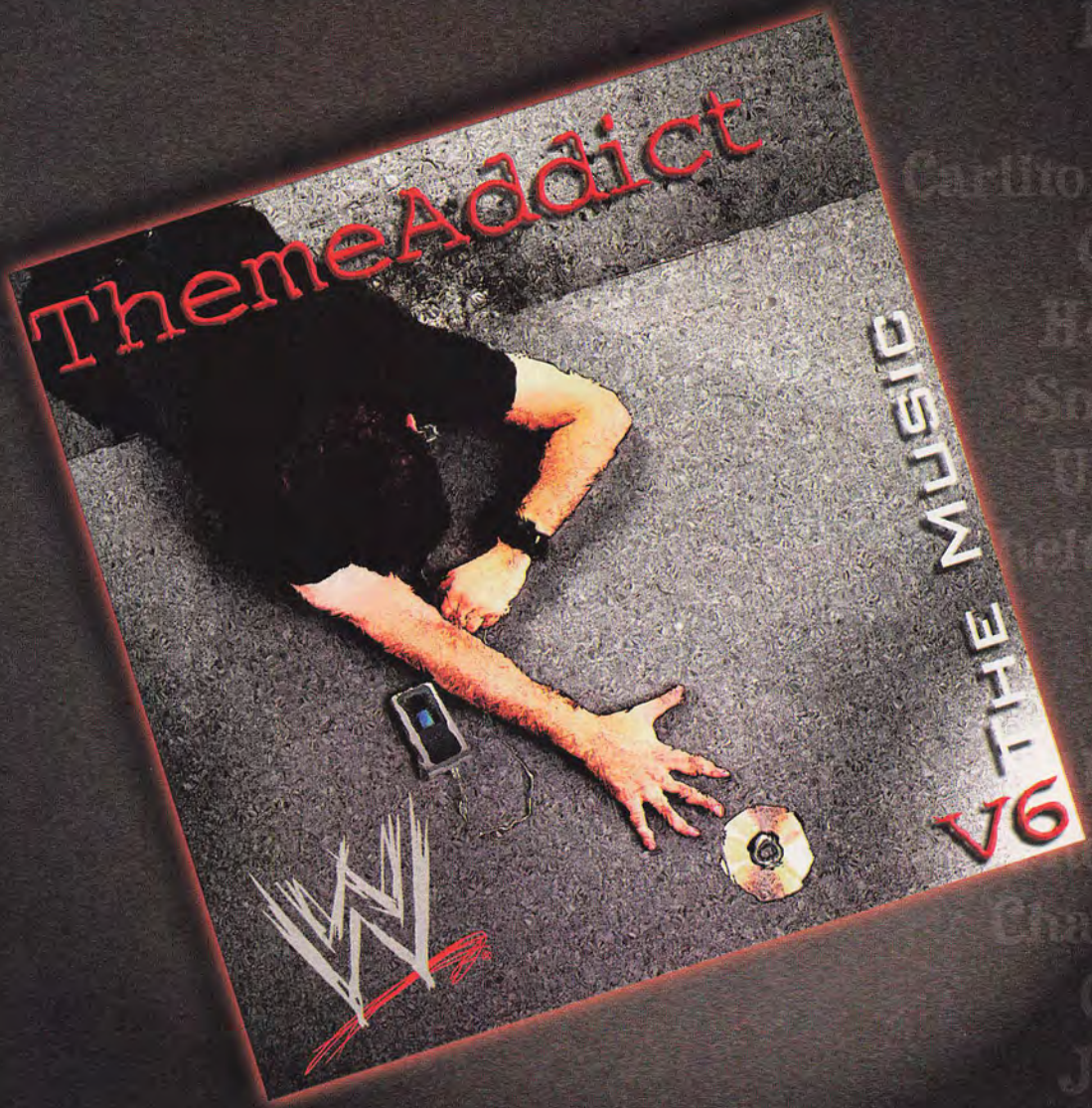
Here Comes Christy

After two grueling months, it all came down to one magical moment as Christy Hemme and Carmella DeCesare stood in the ring waiting for the winner of the *Raw* Diva Search to be announced by The Coach. After all the suspense, Christy was introduced to the crowd as *Raw*'s newest Diva, and since then, she has been bringing her unique enthusiasm and beauty to TV each Monday night.

A Match Made in Hell

A wedding day is supposed to be the happiest day of a young woman's life, but for Lita, nothing could have been further from the truth. Kane forced her to marry him as a stipulation of his defeating Matt Hardy at *SummerSlam*, and the nuptials were aired live on *Raw*. Matt tried to break things up, but it was to no avail as Lita became the Bride of Kane.

Theme Junkie?



Evolution
JBL
Carlito Caribbean Cool
Christian
Heidenreich
SmackDown!
Undertaker
Benjamin
Victoria
Eugene
Kidman
Long
Chavo Guerrero
Gail Kim
John Cena

Featuring 17 never-before-released tracks including the entrance themes of Evolution, John "Bradshaw" Layfield, Carlito Caribbean Cool, a re-mix of Undertaker, the new *SmackDown!* theme performed by Drowning Pool, and a bonus track written and performed by John Cena.

Includes bonus DVD featuring extended versions of WWE Superstar entrance videos.

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"It's Not My Fault!"

Gene Snitsky certainly made no fans upon his arrival to *Raw*, thanks to the manner in which he burst on to the scene. The newcomer saw fit to thrust himself into a confrontation between Kane and the pregnant Lita. In doing so, he knocked Kane on top of Lita, sending her to the hospital. Snitsky insisted he wasn't at fault, even when Lita discovered that she'd lost the baby.

The Second Time Around

Proving their first reign was no fluke, La Résistance regained the World Tag Team titles from Edge & Chris Benoit in November. Maybe it had something to do with the way Edge completely abandoned his tag team partner and attacked him at a crucial moment in the match. It was more than Benoit could bare, and after losing the titles on his own, he was also subjected to a brutal beating by Edge.

Snitsky Kicks a Field Goal

Proving that he had no remorse in his heart for what he did to Lita and Kane, Gene Snitsky quickly went from protesting his innocence to reveling in the pain he had caused. In one particularly low moment, he brought a baby doll to the ring, and proceeded to punt it into the crowd like a football. This is not the way to win the fans over, Gene.

Raw Supports the Troops

In November, the *Raw* Superstars headed to the Middle East for a tour of U.S. military installations. Superstars such as Ric Flair, Chris Benoit, Val Venis, Trish Stratus and Lita visited troops in Qatar and other bases throughout the area. The tour was a prelude to *SmackDown!'s* visit to the Middle East, which culminated in the taping of *SmackDown!* in Iraq.

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Ready for Some Wrestling?

The November 22 edition of *Raw* opened with one of the most hilarious segments in the history of the show. Shelton Benjamin, Trish Stratus and Vince McMahon took part in the vignette, which spoofed the infamous opening of *Monday Night Football* featuring *Desperate Housewives* star Nicolette Sheridan and Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver Terrell Owens. In addition to being a parody of the original, the segment also poked fun at the overblown furor caused by the *MNF* intro.

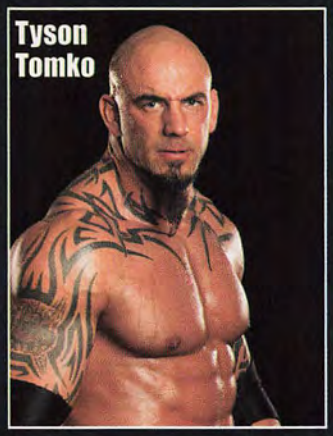
Vacant

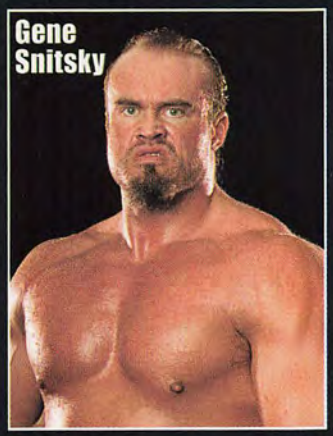
For the sixth time in WWE history, a World title was declared vacant in 2004 when Vince McMahon relieved Triple H of his World Heavyweight Championship in December. The vacancy was the result of a controversial Triple-Threat Match involving Triple H, Chris Benoit and Edge. When no winner could be decided, Triple H was informed that his ninth World title reign was over. It was the first time since 1999 that a World title was vacated in WWE.

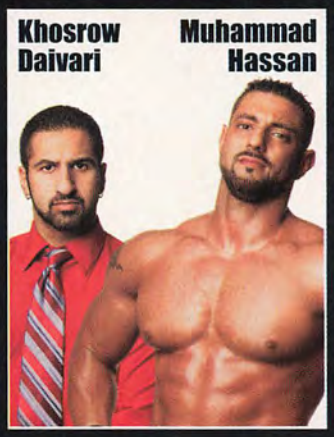
Lita's Back on Top

It's hard to believe that Lita had only won the Women's Championship once in her amazing career, and all the way back in 2000. After a four-year drought, Lita finally regained the gold with a satisfying win over hated rival Trish Stratus in December. But Lita had better be careful—with a record five titles to her credit, Stratus will not rest until the prize is hers again. ■

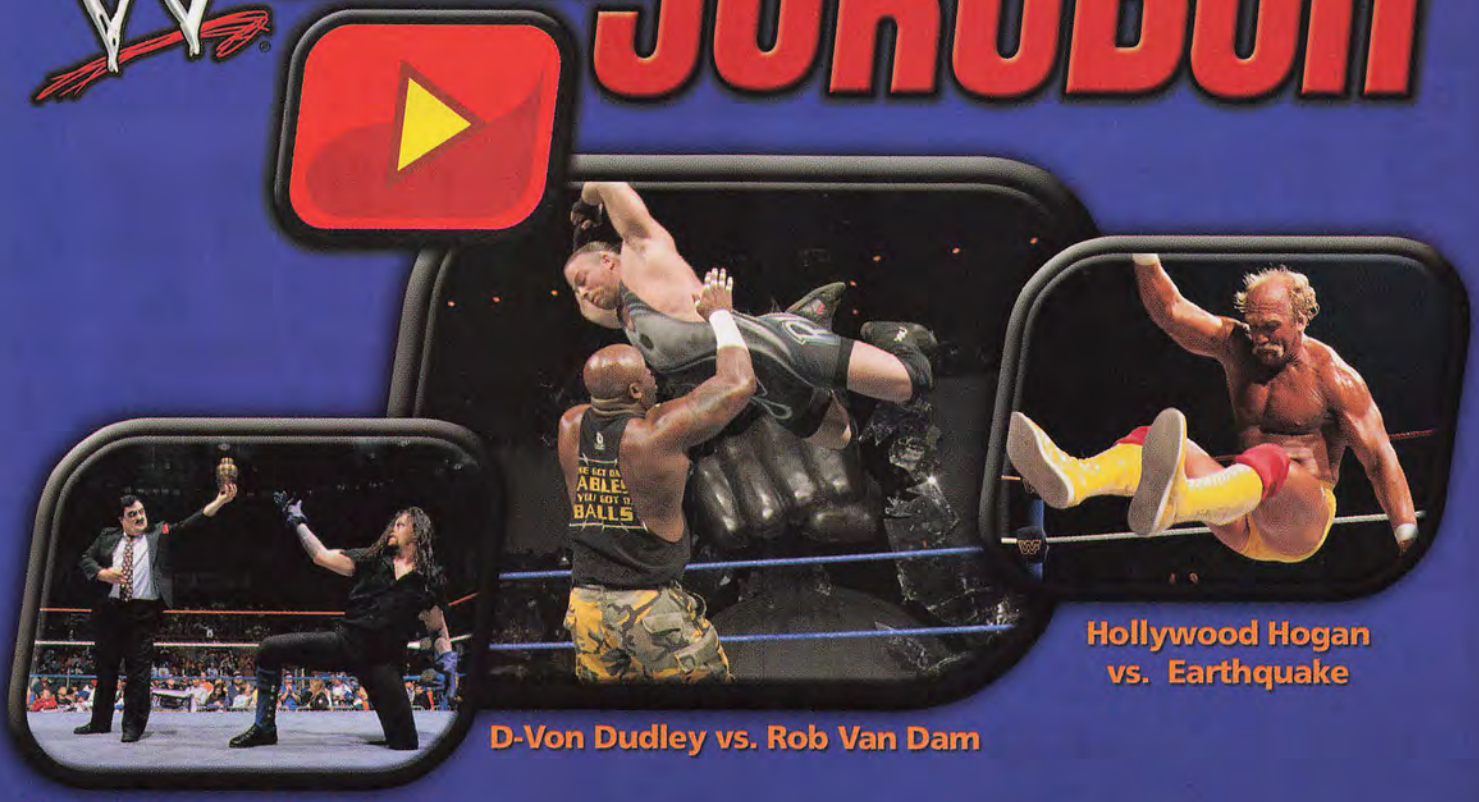
New Blood: 2004's *Raw* Newcomers







WWE MATCH JUKEBOX



Undertaker and Paul Bearer

D-Von Dudley vs. Rob Van Dam

Hollywood Hogan vs. Earthquake

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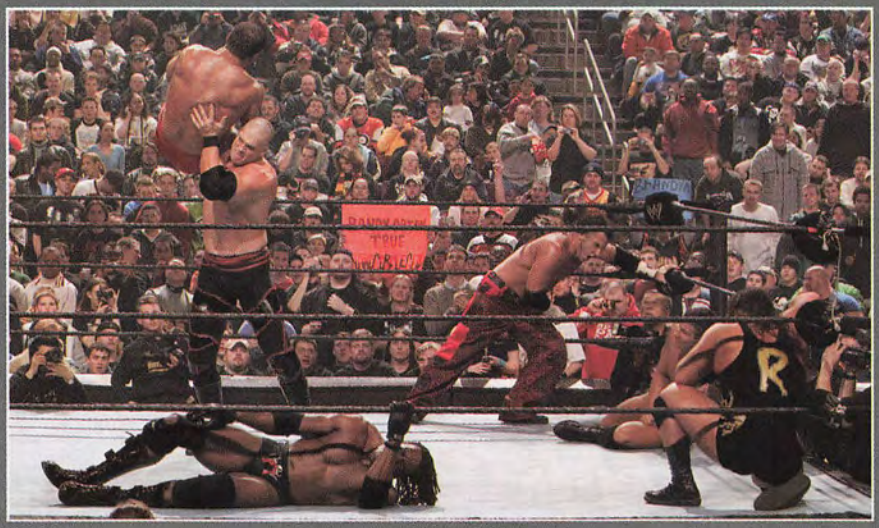


Royal Rumble marked one of Chris Benoit's finest hours—literally—as he lasted a nearly impossible 61:37 to win the *Rumble* as the first to enter and the last to leave. In a classic effort, the Rabid Wolverine managed to eliminate the powerful Bradshaw, the massive Mark Henry, the "Man-Beast" Rhyno, blue-chipper Matt Morgan, A-Train and finally, the towering Big Show. That's a combined 2,155 lbs. of Superstars.

The 30-man *Royal Rumble's* final two participants were No. 1 entrant Benoit and No. 24 Big Show. The odds seemed insurmountable

against the "Crippler," who had to single-handedly eliminate a giant who had previously held off five-man efforts to take him over the top rope. After suffering through a chokeslam, Benoit managed to lock Big Show into the Crippler Crossface. But the 7-footer used his girth to break the hold, and he then went for the kill. Big Show elevated Benoit with ease and tried a press slam to the outside. Benoit fought his way out and caught Big Show in a vice-grip facelock as the two battled over the top rope. Once Big Show's momentum swung, there was no stopping his fall to the floor, and Benoit wound his way under the bottom rope for the victory.

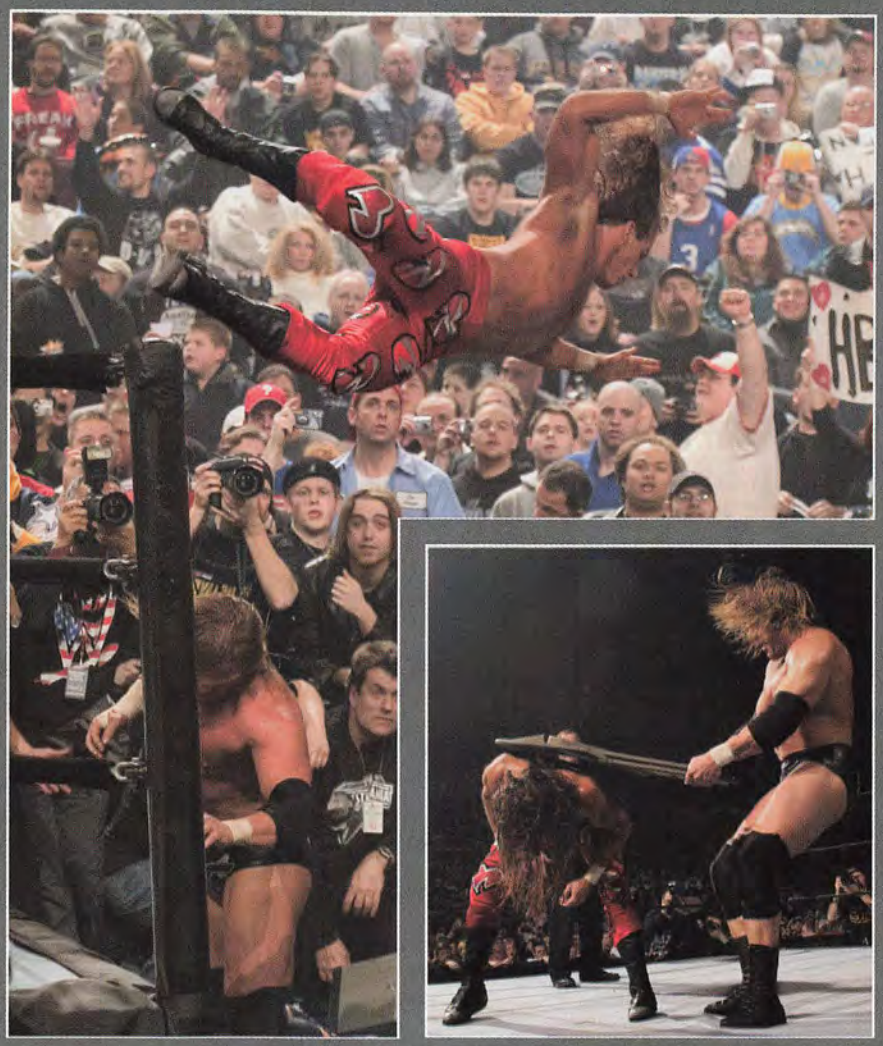
The display of stamina, perseverance and creativity in Philadelphia earned Benoit a title shot at *WrestleMania XX*. When Triple H survived a Last Man Standing Match in a draw against Shawn Michaels, it set up a match for the World Heavyweight Championship that would come at the Madison Square Garden pay-per-view in March.

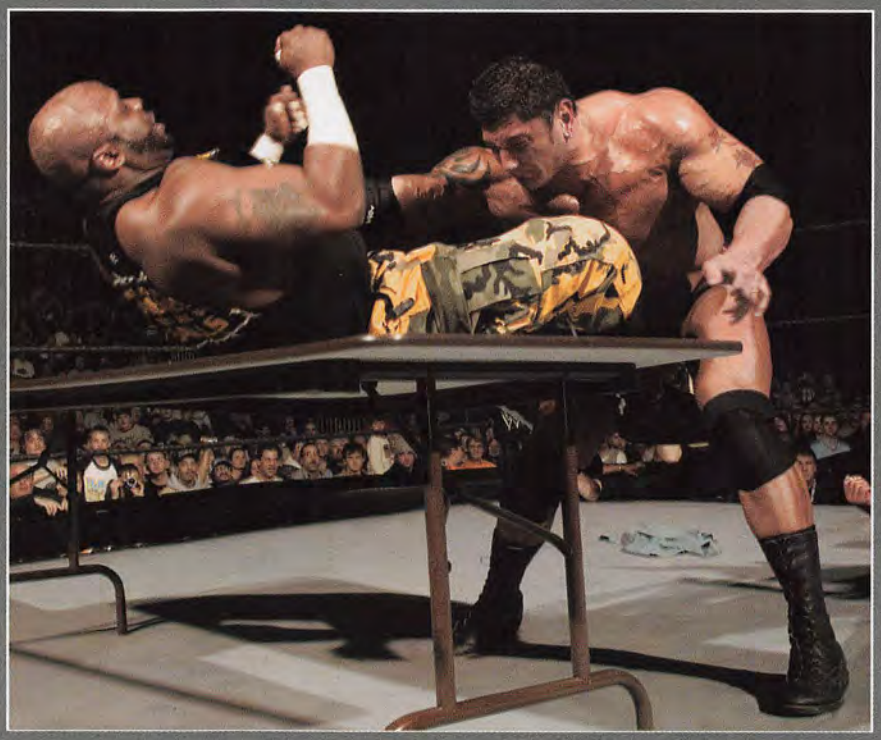
In the WWE Championship match, Brock Lesnar defended the title against 10-year WWE veteran Hardcore Holly. After a hard-fought battle, Lesnar was able to put away the challenger with an F-5 to successfully retain his coveted gold.

In a family affair, Eddie Guerrero defeated nephew Chavo Guerrero. A chest-crushing Frog Splash ended the match, but not the beating. After the bell, Eddie continued his assault.

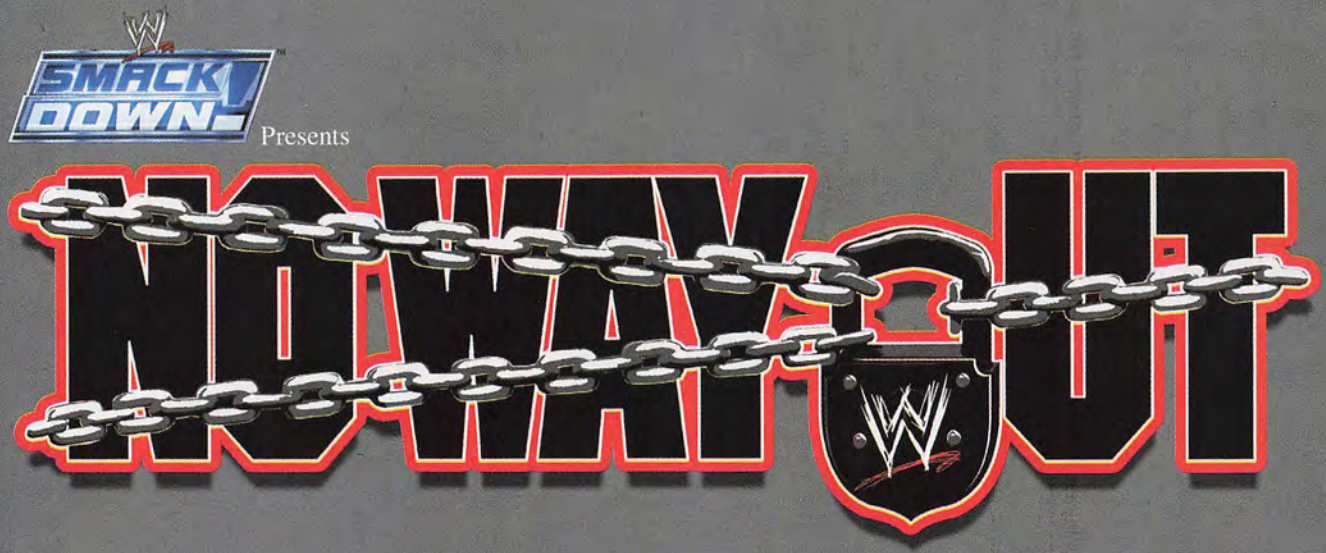
With the World Tag Team Championship on the line, the Dudley Boyz battled Batista & Ric Flair. Everything should have worked in D-Von & Bubba Ray's favor—it was a Tables Match, after all. But ultimately, it was Batista who had the last laugh, as he planted D-Von through a table to claim victory.

Things quickly backfired when a temporarily blinded Nidia tried to interfere on behalf of Jamie Noble in his Cruiserweight Championship match with Rey Mysterio. She accidentally tripped her boyfriend, which left him prone for a 619 and gave Mysterio the victory. ■





NO WAY OUT FEBRUARY 15, 2004 COW PALACE SAN FRANCISCO, CA



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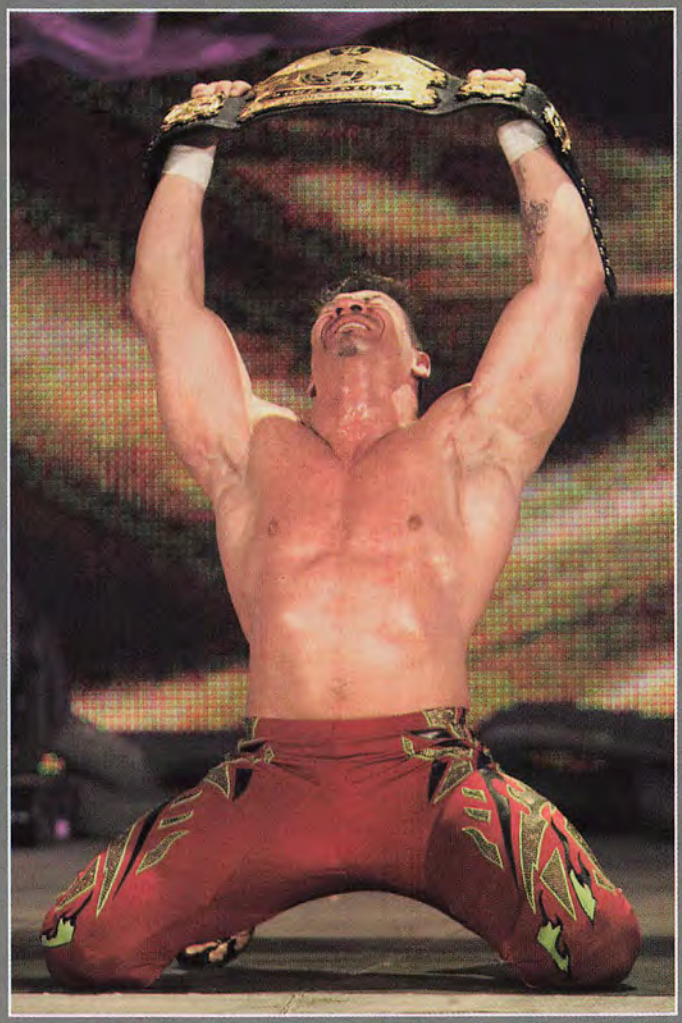
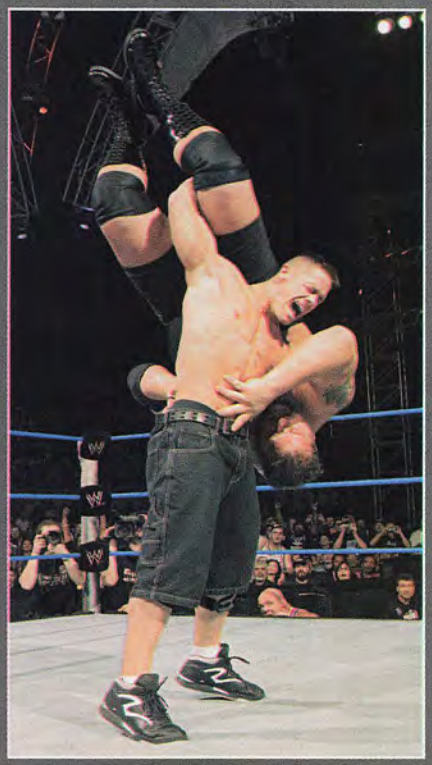
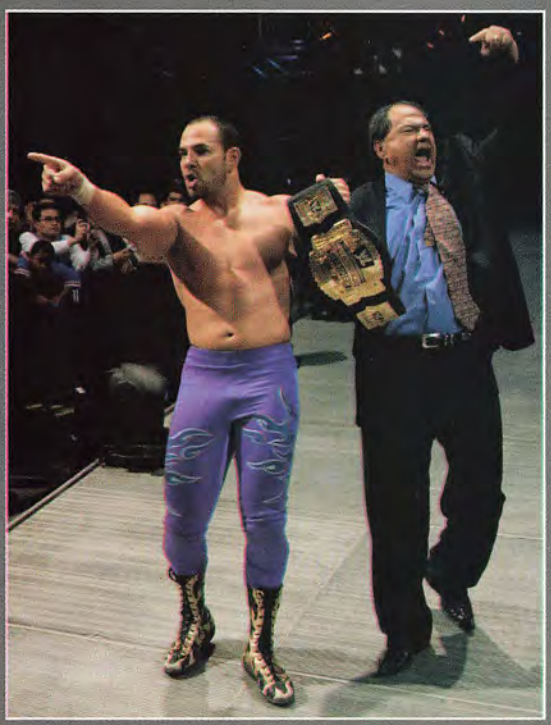
Silencing all those who doubted his ability to "win the big one," Eddie Guerrero turned in the performance of a lifetime against WWE Champion Brock Lesnar. On this magical night in San Francisco, Guerrero would not give up and would not be denied. He willed his way through an onslaught of high-impact moves and punishing holds, then capitalized when his chance came. An interfering Goldberg cut down Lesnar with a spear, paving the way for Guerrero's high-flying Frog Splash. When the referee's hand fell for the count of three, "Latino Heat's" long, embattled career finally had its crowning moment. Eddie Guerrero was finally WWE Champion.





An unpredictable Triple-Threat Match determined the No. 1 Contender for the WWE Championship, which would be on the line at *WrestleMania XX*. It showcased three men with three very different styles, who each hoped to establish the tempo. Big Show wanted to corner his opponents and use his unmatched strength. John Cena wanted to quicken the pace—if his injured knee would hold up. Kurt Angle wanted to keep his competitors grounded and keep things mat-oriented. The former gold medalist survived the brute force of Big Show and took advantage of Cena's aggravated knee. When Angle cinched in the Ankle Lock, Cena had no choice but to tap.

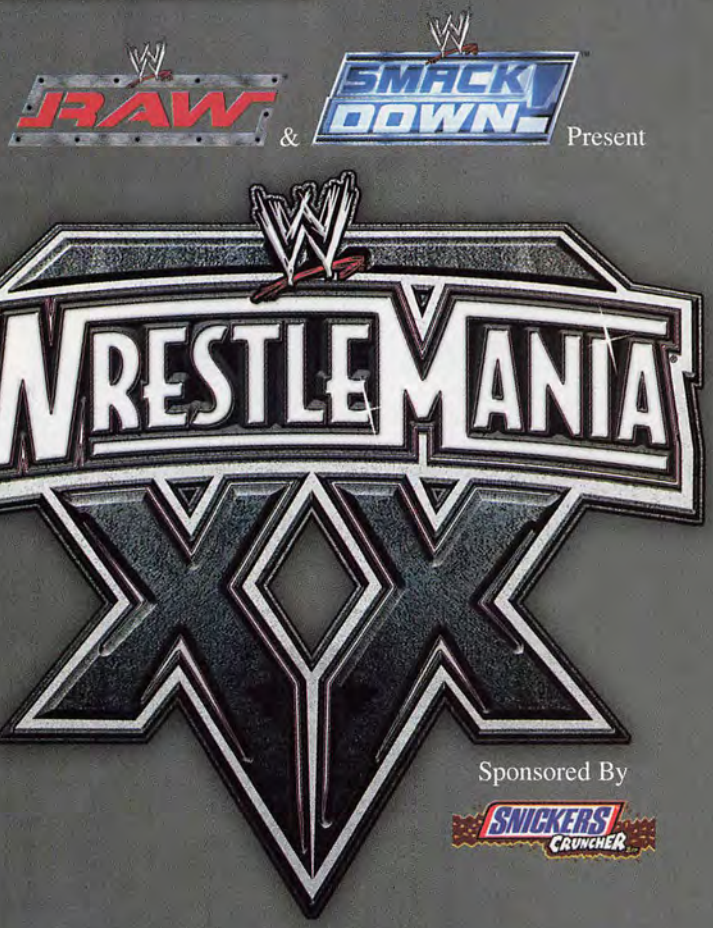


In a high-flying match that enthralled the Cow Palace crowd, Chavo Guerrero (with Chavo Classic) knocked off Rey Mysterio (with Jorge Paez). Classic had gained a reputation for interfering in match after match, so Mysterio wisely brought a high-powered equalizer to *No Way Out*.

The rivals whipped around the ring and flew outside it in a fluid match for the Cruiserweight Championship. Things looked good for Mysterio until Paez was ejected by the referee, leaving the Guerreros free to return to their dastardly ways. Classic picked his spot, pushing Mysterio off the top rope and into a pinning predicament. A sly Chavo Guerrero went on to win the match and the title.

The upstart tag team of Shelton Benjamin & Charlie Haas had challenged many types of teams—but none as physical and experienced as APA. Taking on Bradshaw & Faarooq was a true test for the self-proclaimed "World's Greatest Tag Team." It was a couple of talented rookies against a pair of veterans who knew all the tricks of the trade. Ultimately, the youngsters were able to exploit Bradshaw's injured shoulder and notch a huge victory. ■

WRESTLEMANIA XX MARCH 14, 2004 MADISON SQUARE GARDEN NEW YORK, NY

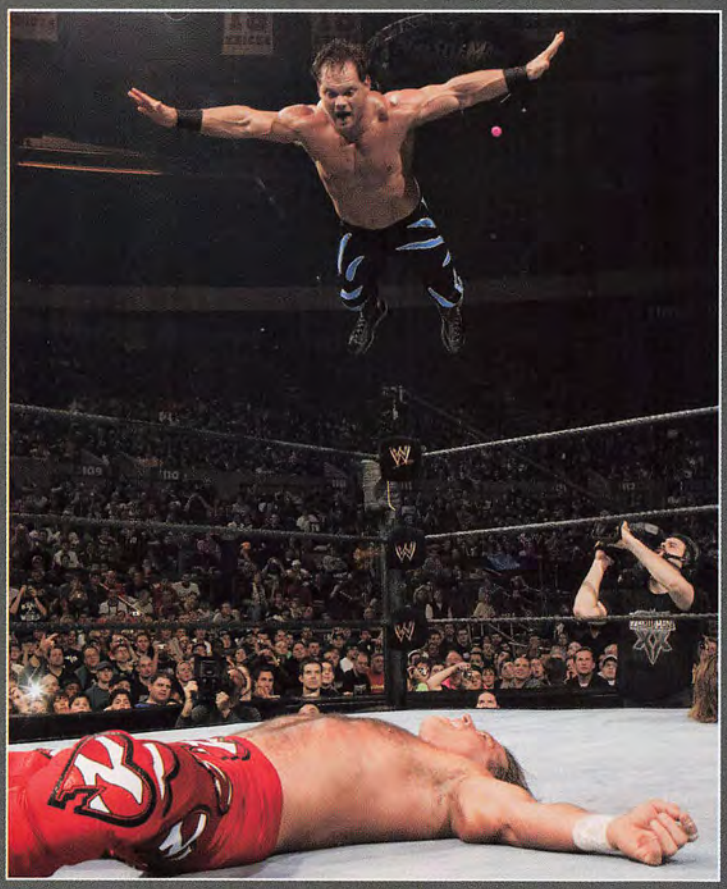


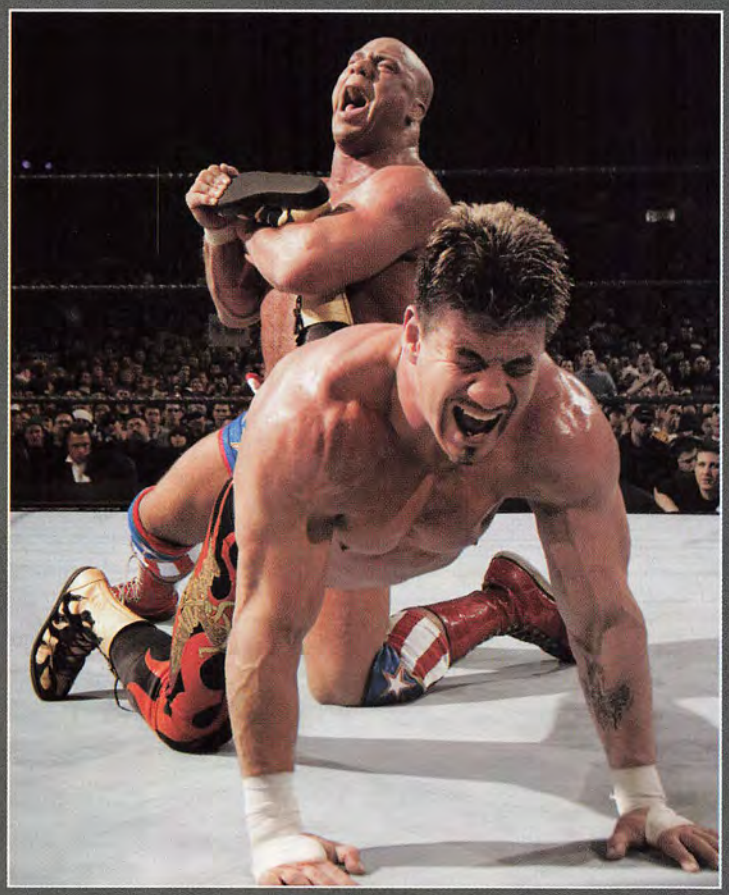
Chris Benoit realized a lifelong dream at the historic *WrestleMania XX*, claiming the World Heavyweight Championship by forcing Triple H to tap to the Crippler Crossface.

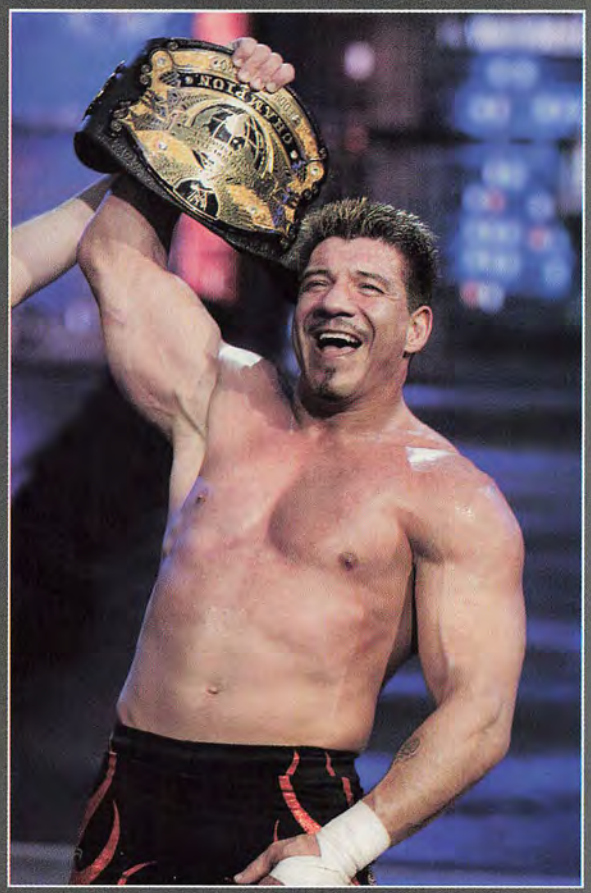
It was a truly monumental Triple-Threat Match, pitting the "Rabid Wolverine," "The Game" and Shawn Michaels against each other with the world watching. As the participants entered the ring that night, the anticipation in Madison Square Garden was palpable. The Superstars were so evenly matched that no one in the capacity crowd could comfortably predict an outcome. The fans, who were squarely behind Benoit, were quickly brought to the edge of their seats by the pace and intensity of the action. There was a frenetic series of near-finishes, during which the "Crippler" cinched in the Crossface, hit a diving headbutt and locked up The Sharpshooter. But gaining the fall in arguably the most important event in sports-entertainment history proved virtually impossible with that third competitor always there to make the save.

Near the conclusion of the epic battle, Benoit reversed Triple H's Pedigree into his submission special. When "The Game" neared the ropes to force a break, a determined Benoit forced Triple H back to the middle of the ring. With no recourse, Triple H finally tapped, sending the Garden into a frenzy and the fans in his native Canada to the streets in celebration.

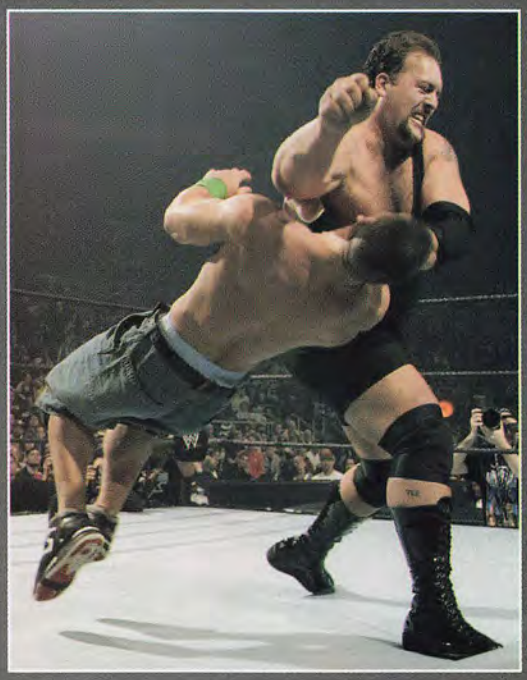
In a moment of poetic justice, the first to congratulate Benoit was longtime friend Eddie Guerrero, who had successfully defended the WWE Championship against Kurt Angle earlier in the evening. Benoit and Guerrero in many ways took the same path to stardom, battling for more than a decade to make it to the top. The evening ended with both champions side by side in the middle of the ring as a blizzard of confetti rained from the rooftop.

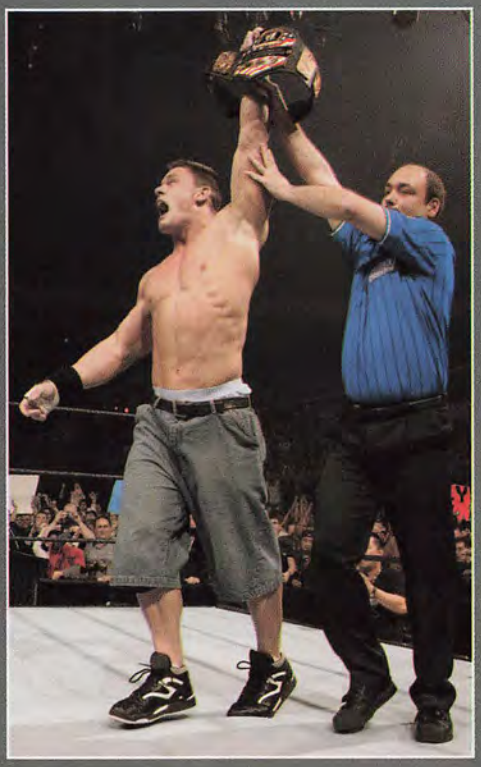






WRESTLEMANIA XX MARCH 14, 2004 MADISON SQUARE GARDEN NEW YORK, NY





Earlier, John Cena captured the United States Championship by cutting down Big Show. When all else failed, Cena resorted to a punch with his specialty brass knuckles. He then lifted the 470-pound giant and delivered the FU to earn his first-ever title in WWE.

In a battle between onetime tag-team partners Chris Jericho and Christian, it was actually Trish Stratus who proved the decisive figure. When Christian sent Stratus flying, "Y2J" came to her aid. But an opportunistic Christian caught Jericho off-guard and picked up the quick three-count. Afterwards, Trish turned on Jericho, who ended up on the receiving end of a Stratus slap and an Unprettier.

Randy Orton's RKO ended a highly competitive Handicap Match, as the team of Ric Flair, Orton and Batista stopped The Rock & Mick Foley.

In a Fatal Four-Way Match for the World Tag Team Championship, Booker T & Rob Van Dam soared over the Dudleys, La Résistance and the team of Mark Jindrak & Garrison Cade.

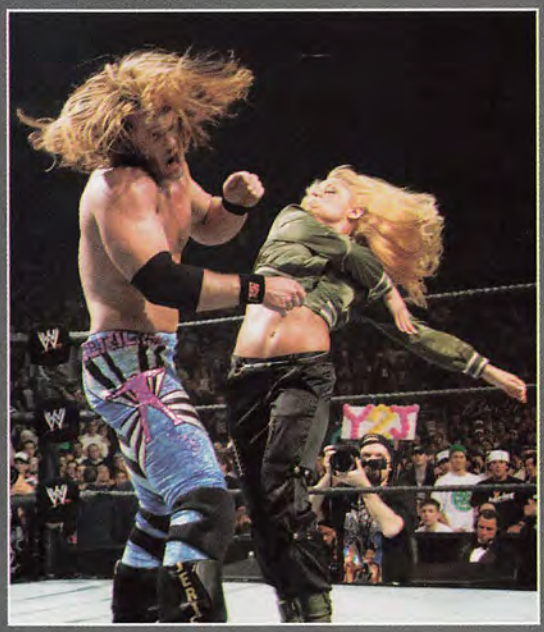
In the counterpart Fatal Four-Way Match for the WWE Tag Team Championship, Rikishi & Scotty 2 Hotty outlasted APA, the Basham Brothers and the "World's Greatest Tag Team" of Shelton Benjamin & Charlie Haas.

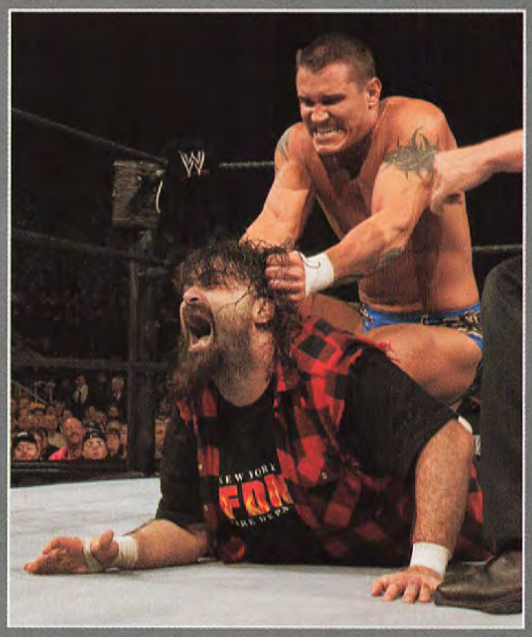
In a unique Cruiserweight Open, Chavo Guerrero retained his title after outlasting Rey Mysterio, Akio, Tajiri, Billy Kidman, Jamie Noble, Nunzio, Funaki, Shannon Moore and Ultimo Dragon.

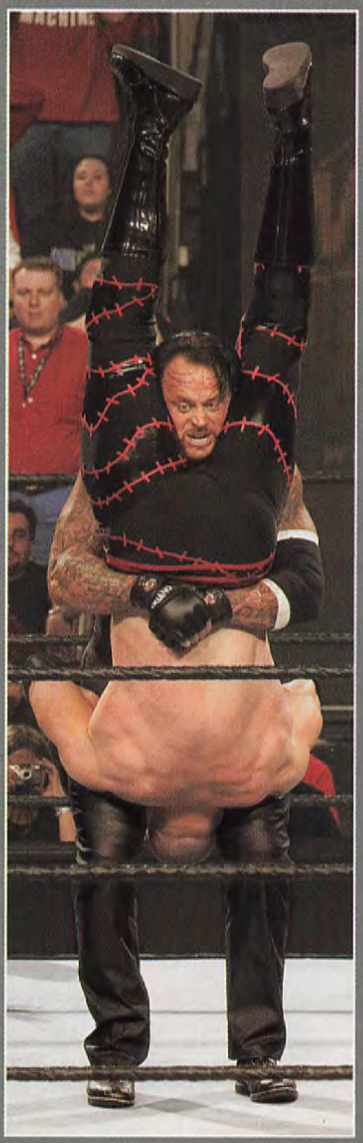
Molly Holly would never be the same after losing not just a match to Women's Champion Victoria, but her hair, as well.

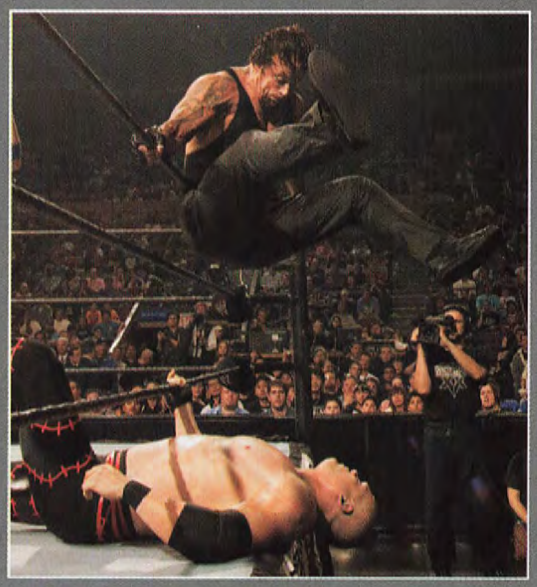
Goldberg dropped Brock Lesnar, but both men then fell victim to Stone Cold Stunners.

In a battle of half-brothers, Paul Bearer guided Undertaker to a Tombstone victory over Kane. With the win, the "Deadman" moved to an unprecedented 12-0 in *WrestleMania* matches. ■









BACKLASH APRIL 18, 2004 REXALL PLACE EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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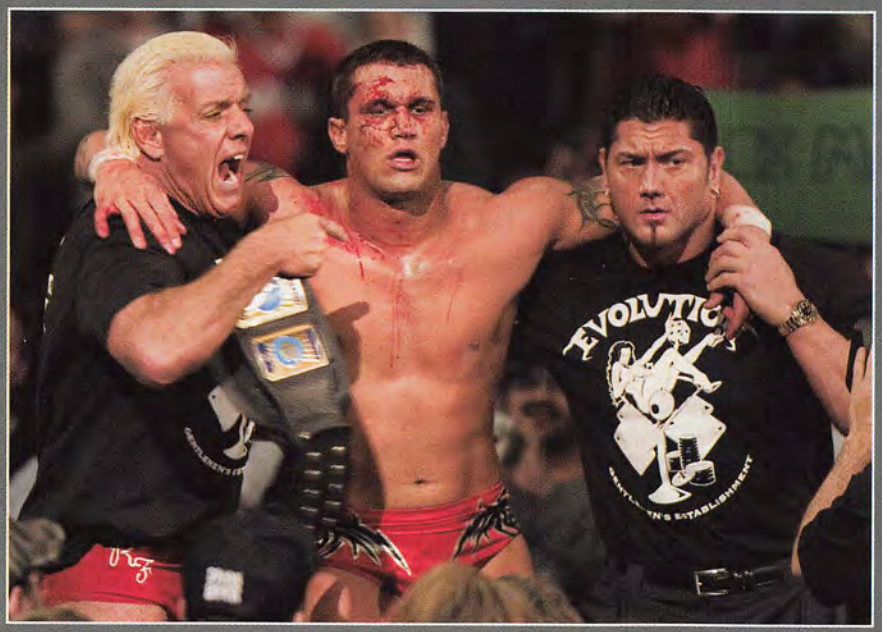
A Triple-Threat rematch for the World Heavyweight Championship ended the same way as the original—with a tap out to a Chris Benoit signature submission. This time, however, it was Shawn Michaels who fell victim to the "Crippler's" Sharpshooter. Triple H did everything he could to regain the title, but the match format and a partisan crowd for Benoit in Edmonton, Alberta, proved too much to overcome.

"Legend Killer" Randy Orton took his career to another level in a Hardcore Match with the legendary Mick Foley. The bloody and brutal affair featured barbed-wire bats, trash cans and even a sea of thumbtacks. In an unforgettable moment, Orton missed an RKO try and landed back-first onto those tacks, leaving metal protruding from his skin for the remainder of the match. In the end, the "Legend Killer" bested the "Hardcore Legend" after delivering an RKO onto a barbed-wire bat.

At *Backlash*, Edge celebrated a successful return from major neck surgery. But facing the Big Red Monster Kane certainly wasn't a way to ease back into competition.



Kane was out to end Edge's career, isolating his opponent's already-broken left arm and using superior size to his advantage. Options were running out for the returning Superstar when the referee was inadvertently knocked unconscious. That gave a desperate Edge the opportunity he needed, and he blasted Kane in the head with the hardened cast on his arm, then ended the match by hitting the woozy monster with a spear.

"The Dirtiest Player in the Game" took on one of WWE's freshest faces when Ric Flair squared off with Shelton Benjamin. The savvy veteran succeeded in locking in the Figure-Four Leglock, but Benjamin made it to the ropes to force a break. In the astonishing finish that followed, Benjamin launched off the top turnbuckle and connected with a neck-whipping clothesline, which incapacitated Flair long enough for the youngster to earn the pin.

After what happened at *WrestleMania*, Chris Jericho wanted payback against both Christian and Trish Stratus. He got it in the form of a handicap match. "Y2J" took control, eventually locking in the Walls of Jericho on Christian, but Stratus used the opportunity as a free shot on her rival. Realizing the numbers would continually work against him, Jericho managed to force a collision between his opponents, then hit a running enziguri to level Christian and win the match. ■

JUDGMENT DAY MAY 16, 2004 STAPLES CENTER LOS ANGELES, CA

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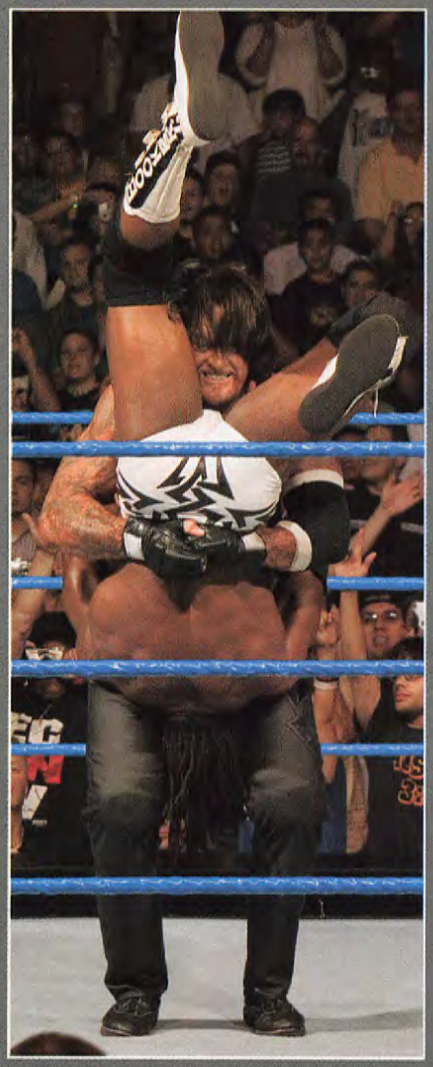
Businessman JBL challenged WWE Champion Eddie Guerrero in a bloody, highly physical main event at *Judgment Day*. The action spilled outside, where JBL opened up Guerrero with a resounding chair shot to the head, then followed up with a stinging clothesline. As the match wore on, Guerrero went deep into his repertoire, but JBL just wouldn't go away. So, the man who readily admits to lying, cheating and stealing resorted to smashing the challenger with the WWE Championship belt. In a rare mistake, "Latino Heat" was unsuccessful in concealing the attack from the referee and was promptly disqualified. JBL had the win, but not the title he was seeking.

Booker T needed a plan for battling Undertaker, so he took a trip to the Darkside. Dabbling in the dark arts, Booker enlisted the help of a voodoo priestess who prepared a concoction designed to hex Undertaker and boost Booker T's chances. But in the match itself, no amount of offense was enough to keep the Phenom down. Not even thrusting the voodoo mixture into the face of the Phenom or hitting the Scissors Kick could slow his assault. Undertaker overwhelmed Booker T



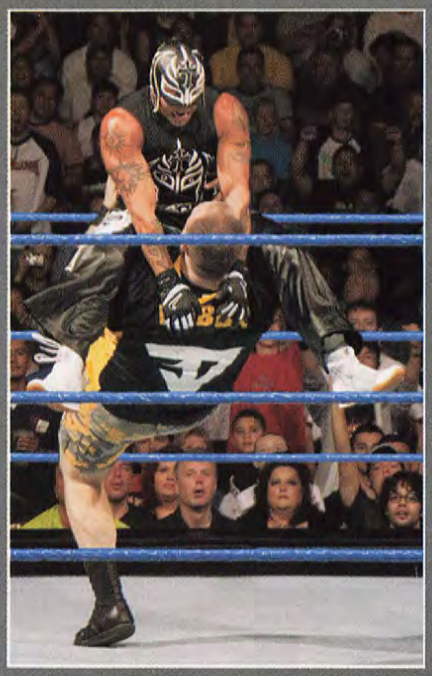
with a big boot, then ended the match with a Tombstone.

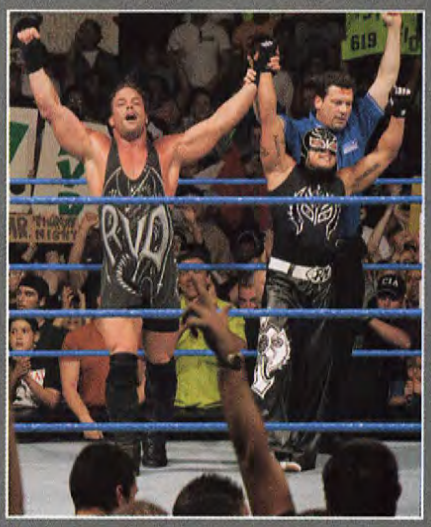
Earlier, two bright young talents tangled for the United States Championship when René Duprée faced John Cena. The French phenom was out to make a name for himself in the *SmackDown!* singles ranks—and what better way than to challenge a mega-popular champion. Duprée took the upper hand by taking the action outside, but it was Cena who finished strong with the FU for the win.

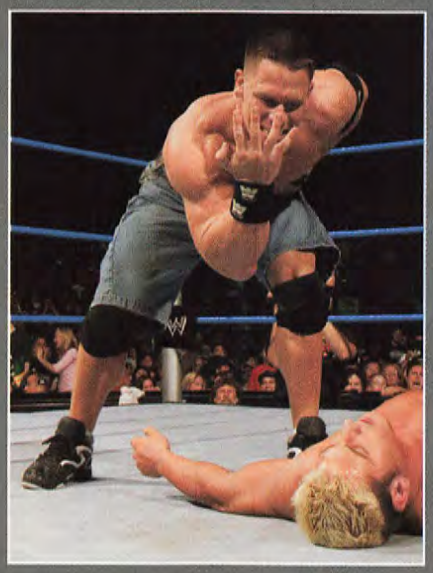
The high-flying dream team of Rob Van Dam & Rey Mysterio were out for revenge after continuous attacks from the Dudleys in the weeks prior. They brought a lightning pace and an innovative aerial attack to the match, but the Dudleys countered with their power, experience and teamwork. When a Dudley 3-D went awry, it opened the door for Mysterio's signature moves. A 619 to both Dudleys set D-Von up perfectly for RVD's Five-Star Frog Splash, which earned the victory for the fan favorites.

In another highly competitive tag team match, the tandem of Rico & Charlie Haas defended the WWE Tag Team Championship against Hardcore Holly & Billy Gunn. Despite their differences and Haas' initial trepidation in working with Rico, the two were hitting their collective stride. The team boasted non-stop energy, Haas' technical skills and Rico's flamboyance and charisma. On the other side were two accomplished veterans who were fed up with Rico's wild antics. Rico's provocative behavior knocked Holly off his game early, but he and Gunn rallied. Billy hit the Fame-ass-er on Haas, setting up Holly for the Alabama Slam. But before Hardcore could hit the maneuver, Rico connected with a kick that sent Holly tumbling into a Haas roll-up for the win.

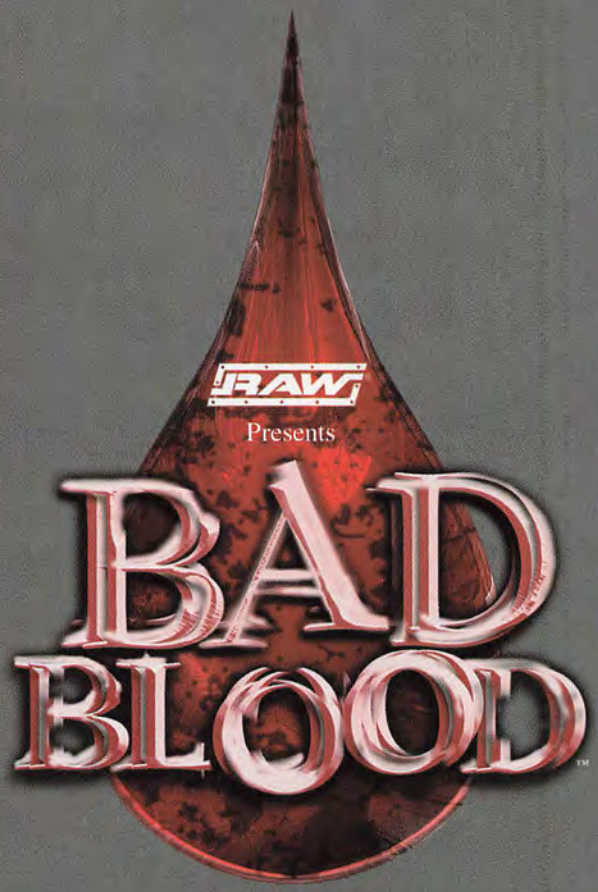
Chavo Guerrero was out to prove that the shocking upset by Jacqueline that cost him the Cruiserweight Championship was just a fluke, and he decided to prove it by competing with one hand tied behind his back. A determined Chavo took the action to Jacqueline, but beating her with the self-created stipulation proved more difficult than originally thought. So, he employed the help of Chavo Classic to free his arm and distract the referee long enough to hit the Gory Bomb and take back the title. ■







BAD BLOOD JUNE 13, 2004 NATIONWIDE ARENA COLUMBUS, OHIO



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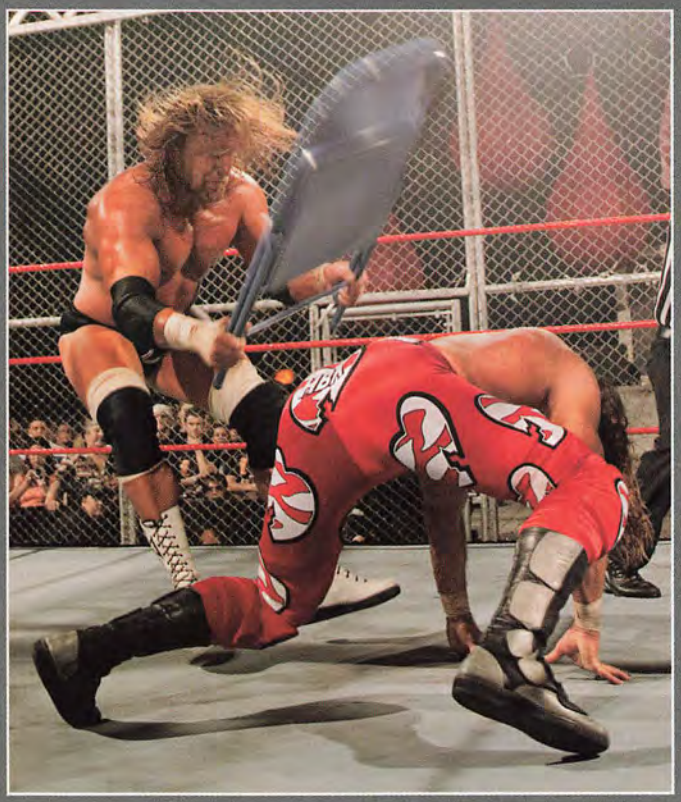

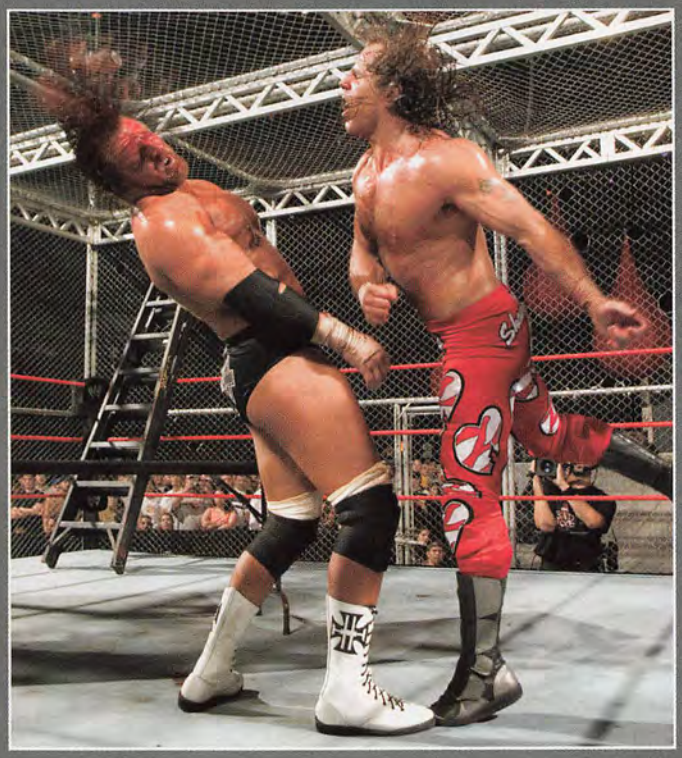

After 45 minutes of sheer carnage and utter exhaustion in Hell in a Cell, Triple H managed to successfully defend his World title at *Bad Blood*, hitting Shawn Michaels with his Pedigree twice in succession.

With no way out of the enclosed metal structure encompassing the ring, HBK still nearly climbed a ladder to victory. With a wicked grin, Michaels pulled a ladder from underneath the ring and proceeded to dissect "The Game." In a career highlight, HBK plunged from the top of the ladder—his head for a moment pressed against the Cell's roof—and delivered an elbow smash, putting Triple H through a table.

But it was the "Cerebral Assassin" who emerged victorious. Bloodied and barely conscious, Triple H survived the kick known as Sweet Chin Music, then Pedigreed his way to the win.

Also, Kane was surprised twice—the second time costing him a chance to claim the World Heavyweight Championship. Chris Benoit got technical and then creative when Kane's power proved too much to contain through submission holds. The "Rabid Wolverine" first confounded Kane by kicking out of a thunderous chokeslam. Next, the champ finished his monstrous opponent by converting a half-nelson into a cradled pin-

ning predicament. When reviewing the tape of the match following its conclusion, the winner declared to the fans watching that "Chris Benoit is for real!" It's a point that was impossible to contest following such a display of strategy and ring savvy.

Earlier, Eugene first dizzied Jonathan Coachman with "old-school" wrestling holds. Then, he closed out the Coach in a fashion that would make The Rock proud: a Rock Bottom followed by a People's Elbow.

Trish Stratus became the only five-time Women's Champion in WWE history when she took the Fatal Four-Way from Lita, Victoria and Gail Kim. Lita thought she had the match wrapped up after a devastating DDT on Kim, but an opportunistic Trish snuck into the mix and rolled up Lita while she was still preoccupied.

Intercontinental Champion Randy Orton eked out a victory over upstart Shelton Benjamin, using a handful of tights and his opponent's momentum for a victory that seemed in doubt for much of the match.

Despite bad ribs, Chris Jericho found a way to cut down a far larger combatant in new Trish Stratus favorite Tyson Tomko. "Y2J" picked his spot for a running enziguri, knocking the "Problem Solver" down for three seconds.

La Résistance retained the World Tag Team Championship despite being disqualified in a match against Chris Benoit & Edge. ■

THE GREAT AMERICAN BASH JUNE 27, 2004 SCOPE ARENA NORFOLK, VA

THE GREAT AMERICAN BASH

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He battled the Dudleys for control of his destiny—then the "Deadman" sealed Paul Bearer's fate.

Undertaker was deeply conflicted during his one-of-a-kind handicap match against the WWE Tag Team Champions. Paul Heyman was one movement away from smothering the kidnapped Bearer in concrete. The "Phenom's" instincts told him to battle for his survival. Paul Heyman told him to take defeat—and a beating—for Bearer's safety. And despite the most diabolical distraction of his entire career, Undertaker ultimately prevailed.

But what followed not only shocked the Norfolk, Virginia crowd, it also shocked Heyman and Bearer as well: Undertaker dropped to one knee, paid his final respects to his longtime confidante and then pulled the cement truck lever himself.

After uttering the words, "Rest in peace," 'Taker watched cement flow up Bearer's neck, then above his head, entombing him inside the concrete crypt. It was an ending to both Bearer and the pay-per-view that couldn't have been anticipated.

Even before the shock of Undertaker's actions, JBL surprised the sports-entertainment world by delivering on both of his promises. JBL beat Eddie Guerrero again. But at the *Bash*, he captured the WWE Championship, as well.

Fan favorite "Latino Heat" seemed to have the Texas Bull Rope Match won. He appeared to touch all four corners in succession seconds before JBL did the same, illuminating a red light above each turnbuckle. When he dove over JBL to smack the fourth and final corner—seeing that last red light shine—it appeared he had magnificently retained his title.

But it was lights out for Guerrero after *SmackDown!* general manager Kurt Angle made what he considered an unavoidable reversal of the referee's call. After further review, it was apparent to Angle that in fact, JBL had been the first to that final corner. Eddie's momentum actually forced JBL's back and shoulder into the corner before the champ's hand came down. JBL's four green lights signified to all that there was a new WWE Champion.

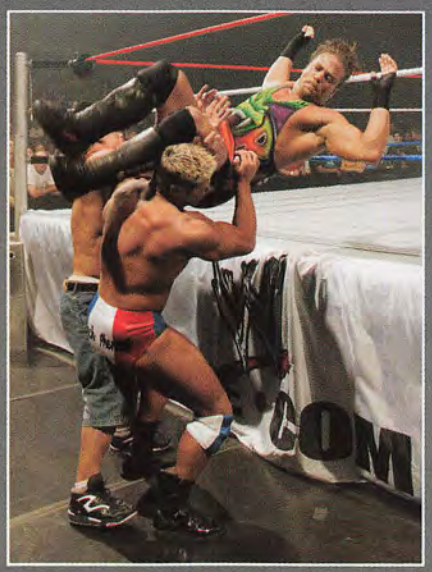
The night wasn't any better for Eddie's family member Chavo Guerrero, who failed to pry the Cruiserweight Championship away from Rey Mysterio.

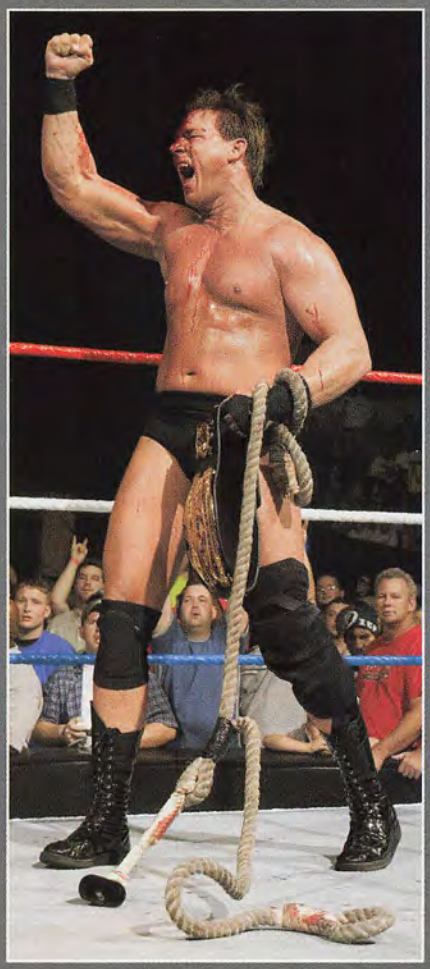
John Cena also retained his U.S. Championship, overcoming massive odds to keep his prize, much to the dismay of a riled Angle. In an elimination-style Fatal Four-Way Match, Cena picked his spots and capitalized on his opponents' mistakes. He ended Rob Van Dam's night early, opportunistically rolling up the high-flying Superstar just after he had delivered a second Five-Star Frog Splash. While

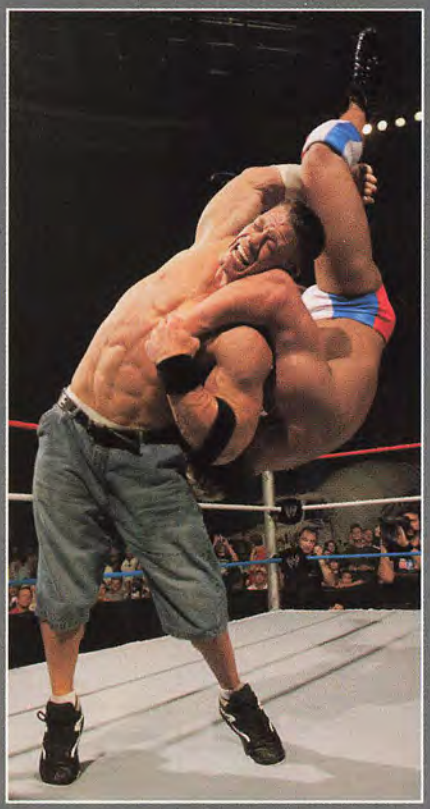
it's a devastating finisher, the splash has always taken a great deal out of RVD upon impact, and after two consecutive deliveries, a weakened RVD just couldn't find the strength to kick out

Next, the frenetic pace of the Fatal Four-Way competition proved too much for René Duprée. He turned the wrong way and found himself hoisted for Cena's FU, but it was Booker T who pounced on him for the pin.

The five-time World Champion was one fall away from capturing another title—and he could smell the victory. He set up Cena for his patented Scissors Kick, but Cena had the move well-scouted. The champ ducked out of the way, reversed Booker T's momentum into an FU and earned the three-count. At an event seemingly named to showcase the U.S. Champion, Cena did his fans proud. ■







VENGEANCE JULY 11, 2004 HARTFORD CIVIC CENTER HARTFORD, CT

This was not a good night to be in Evolution.

In the biggest blow to the supergroup, Triple H was victimized by Chris Benoit as "The Game" failed to regain the World Heavyweight Championship he'd lost to the "Crippler" at *WrestleMania XX*.

Benoit and Triple H went back and forth at *Vengeance*, taking each other's best shots. Benoit even managed to kick out of the Pedigree, and his resiliency frustrated a determined Triple H. After Benoit fended off most of Evolution at key moments during the match, Eugene—who had been recruited into Evolution for the night by Triple H—would emerge as an important factor in the bout.

Benoit and Eugene struggled over a steel chair while "The Game" slowly attempted to get to his feet. Unfortunately for

Triple H, Eugene pulled the chair away from Benoit at just the wrong moment, smacking the challenger in the head. Eugene broke into tears and ran from the ring as Benoit pinned Triple H to foil him yet again.

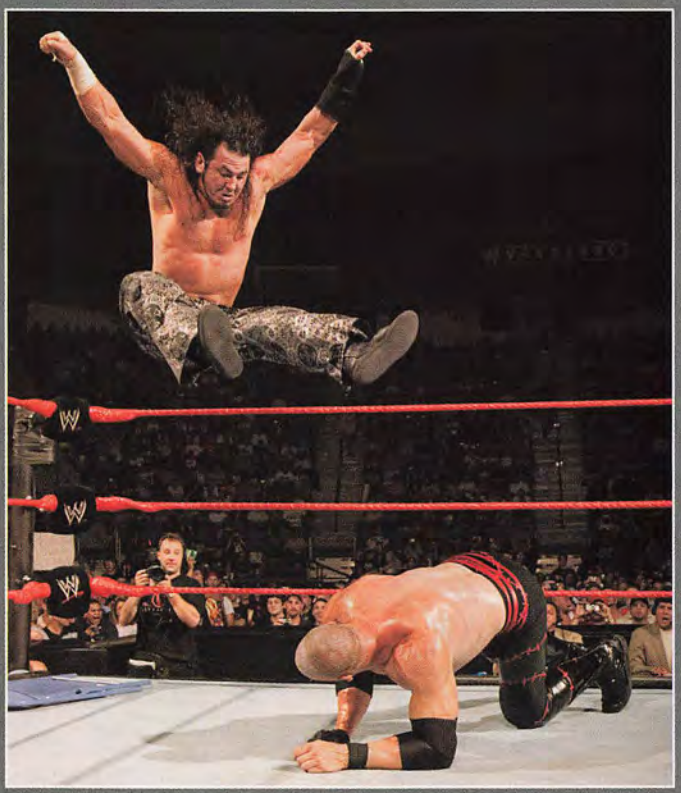
Meanwhile, Randy Orton lost his Intercontinental Championship to Edge, and the odd couple of Ric Flair & Eugene weren't able to defeat La Résistance for the World Tag Team Championship.

The tag team match was especially stinging, as Flair & Eugene were in control before Eugene lost his cool and shoved the referee, which resulted in immediate disqualification. Flair had problems with his unique partner from the outset. In fact, he became visibly upset while watching Eugene mimic many of his trademark moves.

Orton and Edge staged a classic in Hartford, Connecticut. Ultimately, Orton would be done in by his own plan. The "Legend Killer" exposed one of the turnbuckles and prepared to smash Edge's head into the steel bolt that supports the ropes. But Edge would ultimately benefit from Orton's devious actions, as he threw the champion into the exposed corner and then hit his Spear to capture the title.

Only Batista managed to save face for Evolution, as he pinned Chris Jericho after a hard-hitting spinebuster. However, even this victory came with a dose of controversy, as Jericho had his foot on the ropes during the pin. But because the referee failed to see Jericho's foot, Batista earned the biggest win of his career to that point.

In a No-Disqualification Match, Matt Hardy defeated Kane. The Big Red Monster had already chokeslammed Hardy, but then felt compelled to finish the job with the ring steps. That's when Lita stepped in to run interference, allowing her then-boyfriend to grab a chair and collect the win. ■



SUMMERSLAM AUGUST 15, 2004 AIR CANADA CENTRE TORONTO, CANADA

&

Present

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Youth was served and history was made at *SummerSlam* in 2004. And it happened all at once.

Randy Orton became the youngest-ever World Heavyweight Champion when he caught veteran Chris Benoit with an RKO in the main event at Toronto's Air Canada Centre. While some doubted whether Orton had the experience or skill to take down Benoit, the third-generation Superstar was more than up to the task. Sure, Orton took a beating at times, but when Benoit went for his patented diving headbutt, Orton managed to reverse the high-flying maneuver into a resounding RKO.

It was a hard-fought match between a pair of determined Superstars. Benoit and Orton even shared a respectful handshake after the match. Of course, Orton's elation was short-lived, as Triple H and Evolution would turn on the "Legend Killer" in dramatic fashion the very next night on *Raw*.

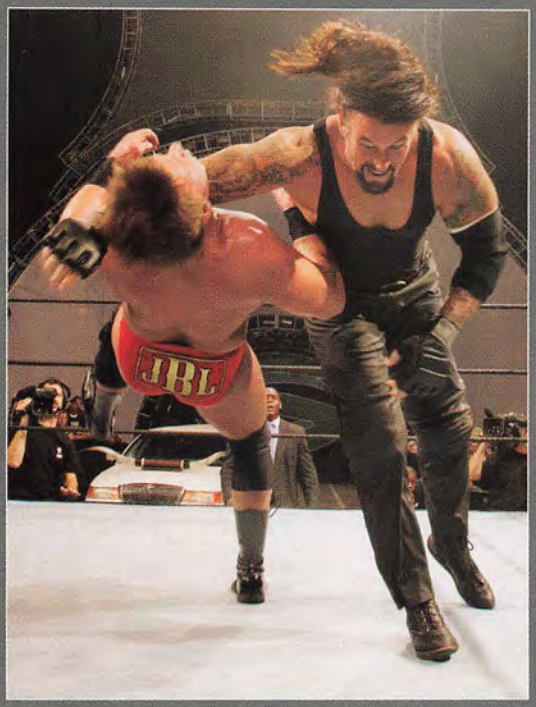
The WWE Championship, however, left the Air Canada Centre the way it arrived—with John "Bradshaw" Layfield. JBL took the majority of the punishment in his match with Undertaker, but when the Phenom struck JBL over the head with his own championship belt, he was disqualified.

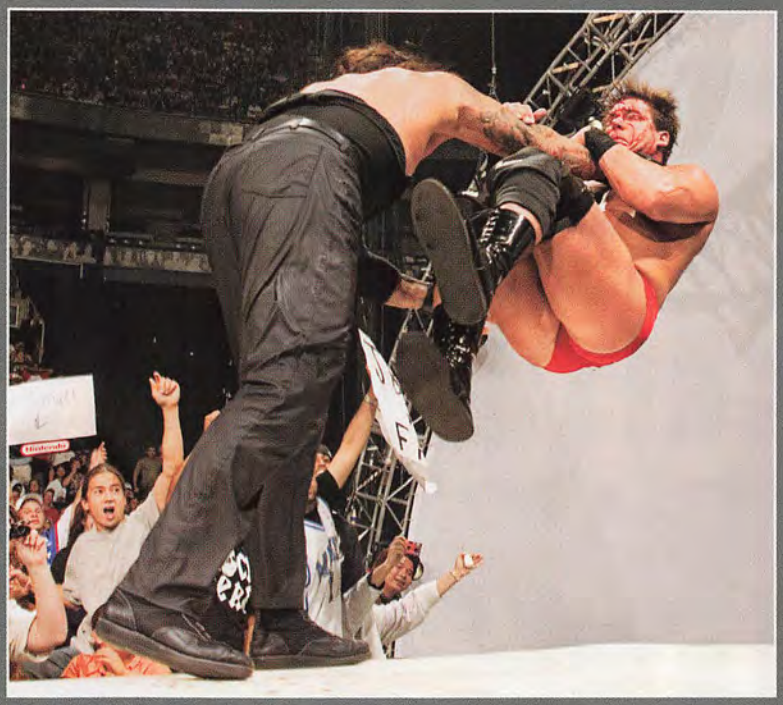
Regardless, a furious 'Taker made sure to get the last violent word, as he chokeslammed JBL through the roof of his own white limo. This rivalry would only grow more heated in subsequent weeks.

Edge retained the Intercontinental Championship in a Triple-Threat Match against Chris Jericho and Batista. After "Y2J" sent Batista to the outside, Edge hit Jericho with a surprise Spear to collect the victory.

The intense rivalry between Kurt Angle and Eddie Guerrero continued at *SummerSlam*.

Angle made a triumphant return to the pay-per-view stage when he forced "Latino Heat" to tap out to the Ankle





Lock. The exciting match was a terrific encore to the battle Angle and Guerrero had at *WrestleMania XX*.

In the first-ever 'Til Death Do Us Part Match, Kane chokeslammed Matt Hardy off the top rope to record the victory and gain Lita's hand in marriage. The couple would go through incredible turmoil in the ensuing weeks, as Lita would suffer a miscarriage after an incident involving boorish newcomer Gene Snitsky.

In the first match of the best-of-5 series for the United States Championship, Booker T would defeat John Cena to take a 1-0 lead.

After a red-hot start on *Raw*, *SummerSlam* was also the site of Eugene's first defeat in WWE. While Eric Bischoff's unique nephew was resilient—he even managed to hit Triple H with a Stunner as well as a Rock Bottom—Triple H proved to be too much. In the end, it was a Pedigree from "The Game" that ended the match.

The Divas also played a major part in *SummerSlam* with the debut of Diva Dodgeball. In a surprising upset, Team Dream defeated Team Diva. The real Divas were so upset that Trish and Victoria brawled in frustration. ■

Presents

UNFORGIVEN®

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Despite blood streaming down his forehead throughout most of the main event, Triple H was prepared to do whatever was necessary to regain the World Heavyweight Championship at *Unforgiven*. And with the timely help of Evolution, "The Game" would defeat Randy Orton for the title he so dearly covets at the Rose Garden in Portland, Oregon.

With Orton in control late in the match and head referee Earl Hebner down outside the ring after an accidental collision, Evolution went to work. Ric Flair, Batista and even The Coach, who was sent down by *Raw* general manager Eric Bischoff to relieve Hebner, were all turned back by the "Legend Killer."

But all of the impromptu housecleaning drained Orton, who eventually got caught with a spinebuster from Batista. Triple H then finished the job with a chair shot and devastating Pedigree to collect the World Heavyweight Championship for the ninth time in his illustrious career. Triple H was the man who groomed Orton to win the championship when he was part of Evolution. And the "Cerebral Assassin" took great delight in taking that title away at *Unforgiven*, especially after Orton had spit in Triple H's face a few weeks earlier on *Raw*.

The Intercontinental Championship would also change hands at *Unforgiven*. Chris Jericho captured the title for a record seventh time, as he upended Christian in a perilous Ladder Match. Jericho won the vacant title after Bischoff had stripped the former champion, Edge, who was unable to defend it due to a groin injury.

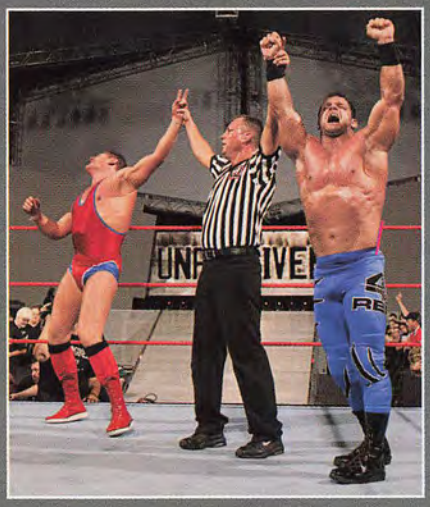
La Résistance would retain their World Tag Team Championship with a

victory over Tajiri & Rhyno. La Résistance ensured their reign, which was more than three months long at the time, would continue by using their Quebec flagpole to clobber the "Man-Beast."

The perpetually unhappy wife of Kane saw her best-laid plans come to fruition at *Unforgiven*, as Shawn Michaels successfully returned from injury to defeat Kane in a dramatic match. The result was also sweet revenge for HBK, who was out of action the entire summer due to injuries suffered at the hands of Kane.

Chris Benoit & William Regal were able to settle a score with Batista & Ric Flair in a tag team match. Benoit locked the Crippler Crossface on Flair, who eventually tapped out to the devastating move. After weeks of watching Evolution mistreat his good friend Eugene, Regal was especially satisfied.

Victoria took Women's Champion Trish Stratus to the brink, but was unable to take away her title. Victoria became preoccupied with the presence of Tyson Tomko, and her distraction played right into the hands of Trish, who nailed her with Stratusfaction for the victory. ■



NO MERCY OCTOBER 3, 2004 CONTINENTAL AIRLINES ARENA EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ

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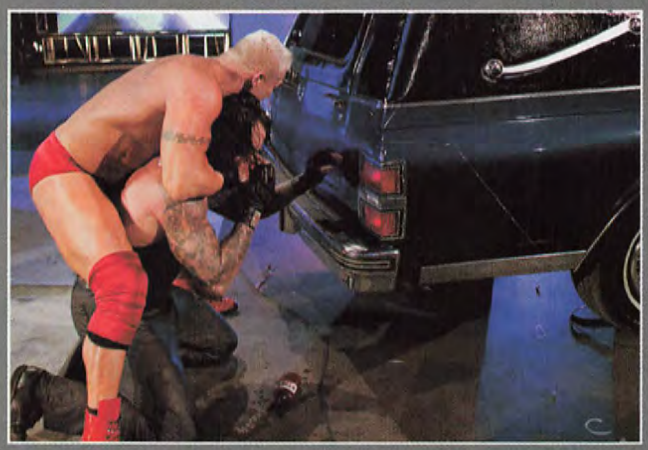
We already had a good idea that Heidenreich wasn't all there. But the shocking developments that took place at the end of *No Mercy* left no doubt that Paul Heyman's newest client was an undeniable lunatic.

With John "Bradshaw" Layfield and Undertaker waging a classic battle for the WWE Championship in a Last Ride Match at East Rutherford, New Jersey's Continental Airlines Arena, it was Heidenreich, a man who wasn't even on the card, who had the most influence on the main event's outcome. As a result, JBL would retain his title in surreal fashion.

Undertaker seemed destined to win the championship as the gruesome match progressed. He even Tombstoned JBL on the steel steps and chokeslammed him through the Spanish announcers' table. The Phenom then carried JBL to the hearse parked outside the ring. But when 'Taker opened the back door, Heidenreich jumped out and attempted to



subdue Undertaker with a chloroform-soaked cloth.

A groggy Undertaker would escape, but JBL hit the Clothesline From Hell on the ramp and then stuffed 'Taker into the hearse. Backstage, Heyman emerged from the driver's seat and then commanded Heidenreich to crash a pickup truck into the hearse at full speed. WWE fans later learned that Undertaker wasn't found when paramedics frantically searched through the twisted steel.

In the fifth and final match for the United States Championship, John Cena survived yet another back-and-forth battle against reigning champion Booker T to regain the title former *SmackDown!* general manager Kurt Angle stripped him of during the summer.

Big Show, sporting a completely bald head, would get his revenge on Angle at *No Mercy*. With Angle cronies Luther Reigns & Mark Jindrak barred from ringside by *SmackDown!* general manager Theodore Long, Show propped Angle on the top rope and chokeslammed him through the air and onto the canvas. Two weeks earlier, Angle, Reigns & Jindrak had taken Show down with a tranquilizer dart and shaved the giant's head.

Kenzo Suzuki and René Duprée continued their WWE Tag Team Championship run, as they defeated the athletic duo of Rey Mysterio & Rob Van Dam.

Meanwhile, Billy Kidman got over his fear of the Shooting Star Press at *No Mercy*.

Kidman nailed former tag team partner Paul London with the finisher twice, the second of which coming after the match was already won and with London strapped to a stretcher and bleeding from the mouth.

Nunzio, who had upset Spike Dudley on *SmackDown!* just a few days earlier, couldn't make it two in a row against the Cruiserweight Champion. Spike would retain the title with the help of Bubba Ray.

Eddie Guerrero was able to put Reigns in his place, as he defeated Angle's hulking henchman with the combination of a steel chair, police baton and Frog Splash. With the referee distracted, "Latino Heat" actually stole a baton from an unsuspecting officer patrolling the crowd, and later smacked Reigns in the head with the weapon to help record the pinfall.

In an interesting intergender match, Rico, Charlie Haas & Miss Jackie defeated Dawn Marie & the Dudleys. This match is probably best remembered for the uncomfortable kiss Rico planted on an unsuspecting Bubba Ray. ■

TABOO TUESDAY OCTOBER 19, 2004 BRADLEY CENTER MILWAUKEE, WI

Presents

TABOO TUESDAY™

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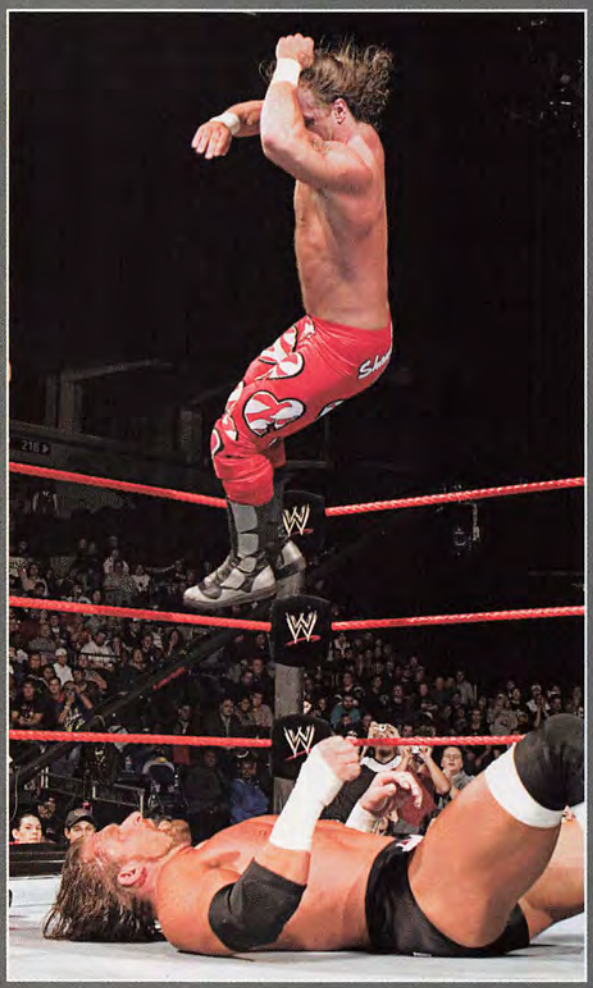


Never before has a WWE pay-per-view began with more uncertainty. At *Taboo Tuesday* in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, WWE fans had the ultimate say in what took place. With voting set up through WWE.com, fans would determine opponents, stipulations, and in the case of the Divas, fans also made wardrobe decisions. All of this made for a wild night for everyone on the *Raw* roster.

In the main event, Triple H retained his World Heavyweight Championship in an exhausting battle against an injured Shawn Michaels. HBK was chosen over Edge and Chris Benoit by the fans to challenge Triple H. Michaels competed despite a knee injury suffered just days earlier. In fact, HBK had Triple H reeling and was prepared to finish him off with Sweet Chin Music, when Edge—still angry after placing second in the voting—charged the ring and speared HBK. The change of momentum was enough to help Triple H retain his title.

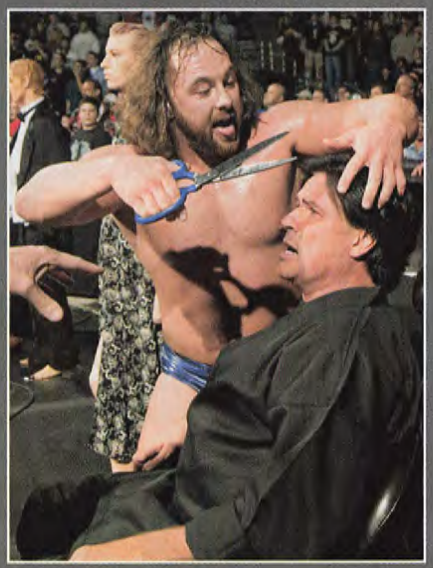
Chris Jericho, the Superstar who actually helped Mr. McMahon come up with the idea for *Taboo Tuesday*, would ironically lose the most. Shelton Benjamin, the overwhelming choice of the fans to take on Jericho for the Intercontinental Championship, pulled off the upset, defeating "Y2J" to pick up his first singles title.

Meanwhile, Ric Flair and Randy Orton had a memorable and bloody affair in a steel cage, the match type chosen by the fans. Orton cemented his status as a "Legend Killer" by avoiding a chair shot and landing the RKO for the victory.

Gene Snitsky emerged as a force to be reckoned with at *Taboo Tuesday*, not only beating Kane in a Weapons of Choice Match, but also putting him out of action. Snitsky beat Kane down with a steel chain, the weapon chosen by WWE fans, and used a steel chair for the finishing touch of brutality. In much the same manner that Kane injured Shawn Michaels a few months earlier, Snitsky placed the Big Red Monster's neck in the chair and then jumped down from the top rope to crush his throat.

Nearly five months after capturing the World Tag Team Championship, La Résistance lost to the very team they beat for the title on May 31. Since Shawn Michaels was selected by the fans to take on Triple H for the World Heavyweight Championship, Edge & Chris Benoit were given the opportunity to challenge the tag champs. But the consolation prize didn't go over too well with Edge, who brooded over the choice of the fans all night and ultimately walked out on the match, leaving Benoit to fend for himself. The Rabid Wolverine mounted a fierce comeback, and he eventually applied the Crippler Crossface on Rob Conway, who tapped out after he couldn't get to the ropes.

Eugene would get sweet revenge against his uncle, *Raw* general manager Eric Bischoff. After he defeated Bischoff with a legdrop, Eugene shaved Bischoff's head as the stipulation chosen by WWE voters. *Raw* Diva Search winner Christy Hemme would defeat jilted runner-up Carmella DeCesare in a Lingerie Pillow Fight, and Trish would retain her Women's Championship in a Fulfill Your Fantasy Diva Battle Royal. All the Divas were outfitted in enticing schoolgirl outfits, in accordance with the vote of the fans. ■



SURVIVOR SERIES NOVEMBER 14, 2004 GUND ARENA CLEVELAND, OH

Present

SURVIV(O)R SERIES

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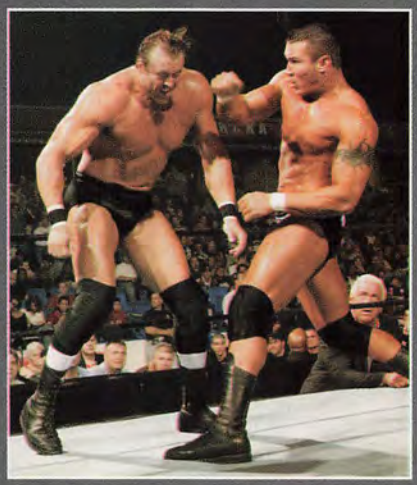


The main event for *Survivor Series* captured the essence of the traditional autumn WWE pay-per-view. Even the final match, a Classic *Survivor Series* Elimination encounter, was meant to pay homage to the event's past. But, the result was sure to make Triple H's future quite miserable.

Team Orton, composed of Chris Benoit, Chris Jericho, Maven and the "Legend Killer" himself, Randy Orton, defeated Team Triple H, which included Gene Snitsky, Batista & Edge. As a result, Orton and his crew would take turns running *Raw* while Eric Bischoff went on a month-long vacation. Triple H's reign as World Heavyweight Champion would surely be tested as four of his bitter enemies called the shots on *Raw*.

John "Bradshaw" Layfield, the WWE Champion, also had a rough night, but he still left Cleveland, Ohio with his title. Despite a spirited effort from Booker T, JBL—with the timely help of his Chief of Staff, Orlando Jordan—would retain his championship. The victory came just three days after JBL promised to leave *SmackDown!* forever if he lost.

The *SmackDown!* Superstars also had a Classic *Survivor Series* Elimination Match, which included the return of John Cena. The former United States Champion had missed nearly a month of action while recovering from puncture wounds in the kidney area. Upon his introduction, Cena immediately went after Carlito Caribbean Cool, the man who stole the U.S. Championship and

his steel chain just hours before Cena's nightclub incident in Boston.

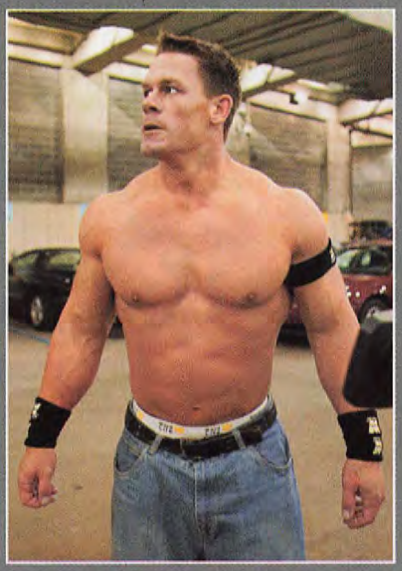
In the end, Kurt Angle's team, which included Luther Reigns, Mark Jindrak & Carlito, was no match for Eddie Guerrero's unit of Cena, Big Show & Rob Van Dam. Once Carlito literally fled the building and Reigns and Jindrak were eliminated, Angle was left alone to fend off Guerrero, Show & Cena.

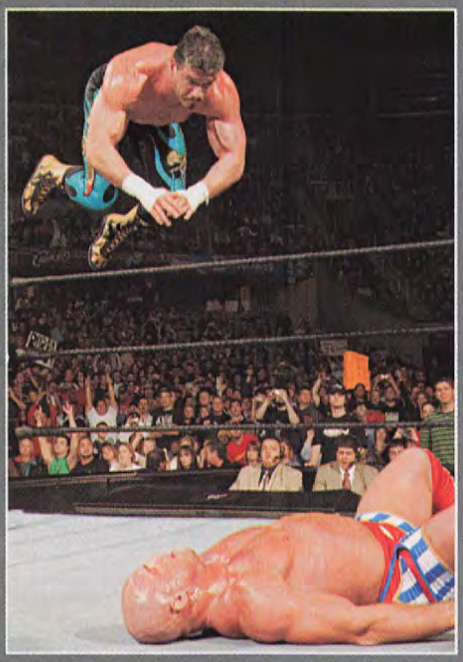
Undertaker would get his revenge on the unstable Heidenreich. Undertaker connected with a chokeslam, Tombstone and the Last Ride to put away Paul Heyman's demented client.

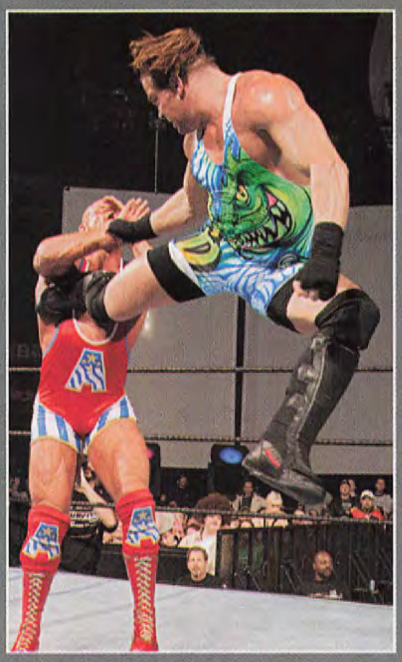
Rising star Shelton Benjamin proved to be a worthy Intercontinental Champion, as he successfully defended his title against Christian in an exciting affair. Benjamin fended off Christian as well as the challenger's "Problem Solver," Tyson Tomko, en route to the victory.

The Women's Championship didn't change hands. Then again, that wasn't necessarily Lita's goal. After weeks of being verbally tortured by champ Trish Stratus, Lita made sure it was a painful payback. She attacked Trish and used the steel steps and a chair as a weapon. Trish fractured her nose, but retained her title by disqualification.

The show opened with a thrilling Fatal Four-Way Match for the Cruiserweight Championship. Spike Dudley, Chavo Guerrero, Rey Mysterio and Billy Kidman sacrificed their bodies in an effort to take away Spike's title. Bodies were strewn everywhere during this high-flying affair, but Spike retained his title as he scored the pin on Chavo Guerrero. ■







ARMAGEDDON DECEMBER 12, 2004 GWINNETT CENTER ATLANTA, GA

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ARMAGEDDON

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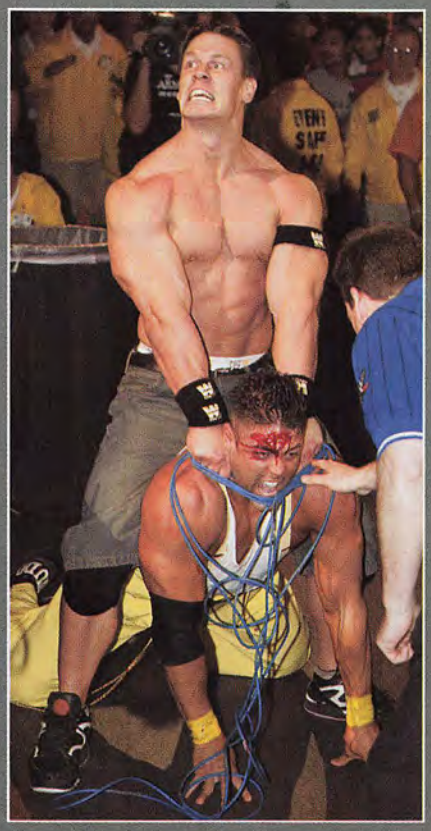
Heidenreich made an unexpected return during *Armageddon*, and nobody was happier to see the sadistic and unstable monster than WWE Heavyweight Champion John "Bradshaw" Layfield.

Just when you thought there was no way JBL would be able to retain his WWE title in the Fatal Four-Way main event, Heidenreich appeared out of nowhere, reminding many of the bizarre finish to the Last Ride Match at *No Mercy*. Undertaker was preparing to put the finishing touches on JBL when Heidenreich, who had been staying at a mental institution just a few days prior, stormed the ring and attacked 'Taker.

With all three of the challengers seemingly out cold, JBL tried to pin Eddie Guerrero, and then Booker T, but both men kicked out. And before JBL could get to 'Taker, the Deadman popped up, ready to punish a petrified JBL.

But Heidenreich pulled 'Taker out of the ring and applied a choke on him. Meanwhile, Booker T was greeted with a Clothesline from Hell as JBL got the unlikely and exhausting victory to retain his WWE Championship.



John Cena got his revenge on Jesus and took back his steel chain in a Street Fight for the United States Championship at *Armageddon*. Cena bloodied and savagely beat down Jesus. The Doctor of Thuganomics choked his opponent with cable wires and then battered him with a trash can lid and metal street sign before connecting with the FU and easy cover.

When the match was over, Cena took back his steel chain, but not before knocking Carlito out with it to the delight of the Atlanta crowd.

It didn't come as easily as expected, but Daniel Puder won a decision from the crowd over underdog Mike Mizanin in the $1,000,000 *Tough Enough* Dixie Dog Fight. Puder, a former cage fighter, hit Mizanin with a couple of strong right hands early in the three-round bout. Mizanin was able to hang around by staying active and grabbing when in close quarters.

Since nobody was knocked out during the three rounds, *SmackDown!* general manager Theodore Long let the fans of Atlanta decide. And the crowd roared its approval for Puder.

Earlier in the night, Kurt Angle made Santa Claus tap out as part of his ruthless Angle Invitational. But when it came time for the 3-on-1 Handicap Match against Big Show, the 7-foot giant prevailed over the sadistic trio of Angle, Luther Reigns & Mark Jindrak.

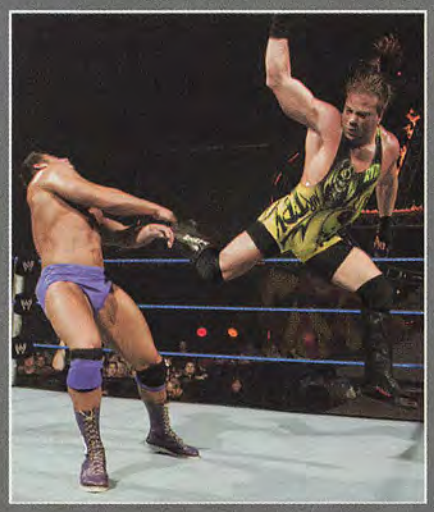
Angle and his ruthless buddies dominated the early going, but Big Show rallied, taking all three men out and saving the most damage for Jindrak, who was caught with an F-5 to end the match.

In the upset of the night, Funaki stunned Spike Dudley to become the WWE Cruiserweight Champion. After Spike went for a sunset flip, Funaki reversed the move for the biggest victory of his career. It was quite a week for Funaki, who won a Cruiserweight Battle Royal on the December 9 edition of *SmackDown!* just to get a title shot.

Dawn Marie was the winner in the ring, but both she and fellow Diva Miss Jackie were spurned by Charlie Haas after their match was over. With Haas serving as the special guest referee, Dawn used a fistful of Miss Jackie's tights to record the pin. Haas saw the shortcut, but decided to ignore the infraction.

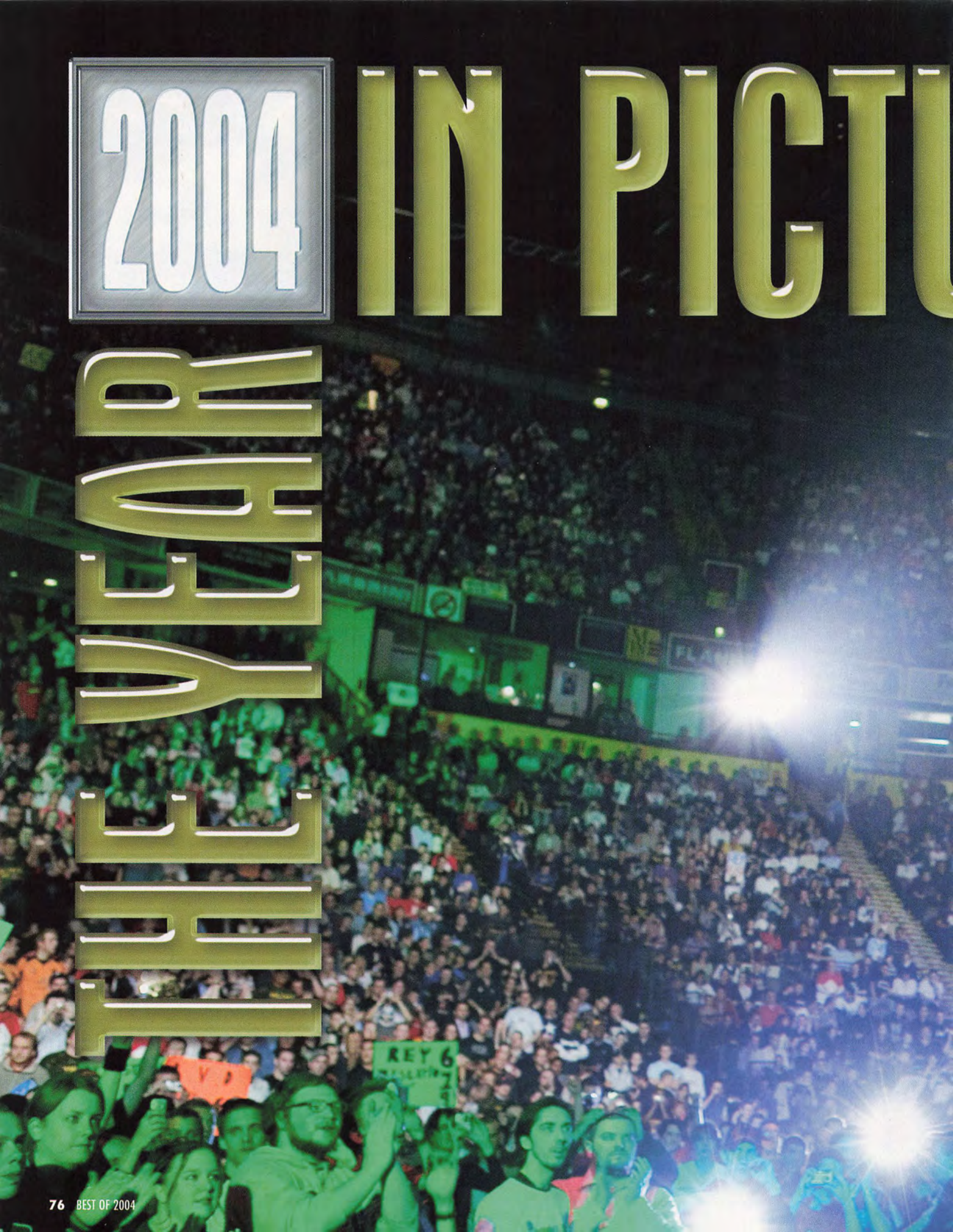
Haas then admitted to having an affair with Dawn Marie, broke off his engagement with Miss Jackie and insulted Dawn Marie before walking out of the ring, leaving both women embarrassed.

Rob Van Dam & Rey Mysterio, who became WWE Tag Team Champions on the *SmackDown!* just prior to *Armageddon*, retained their titles with a victory over former champs and rivals Kenzo Suzuki & René Duprée. RVD & Mysterio took control late in the match. Mysterio hit the 619 on Duprée, who was then quickly crushed by an RVD Five-Star Frog Splash for the victory. ■



2004 IN PICTU

THE YEAR



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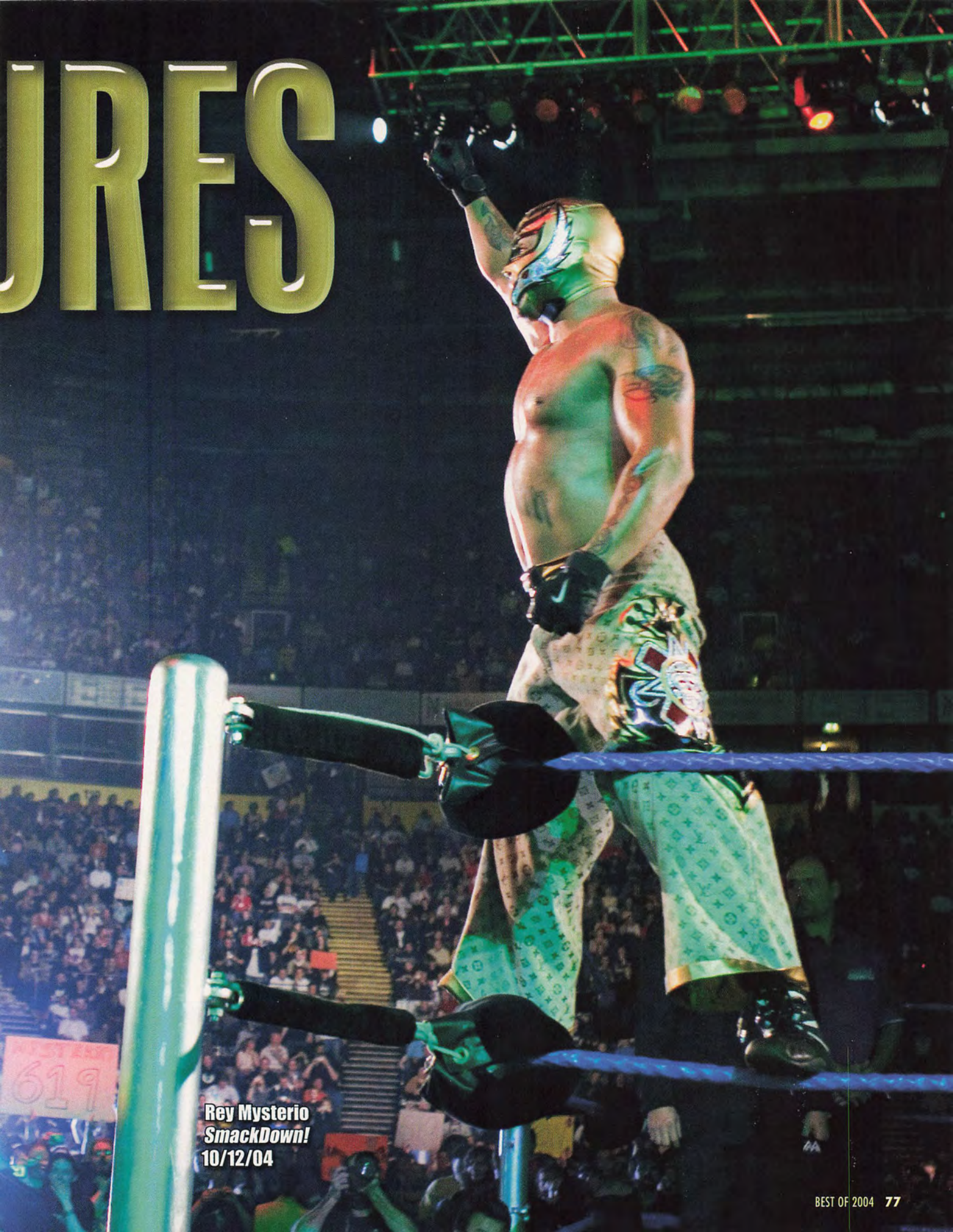
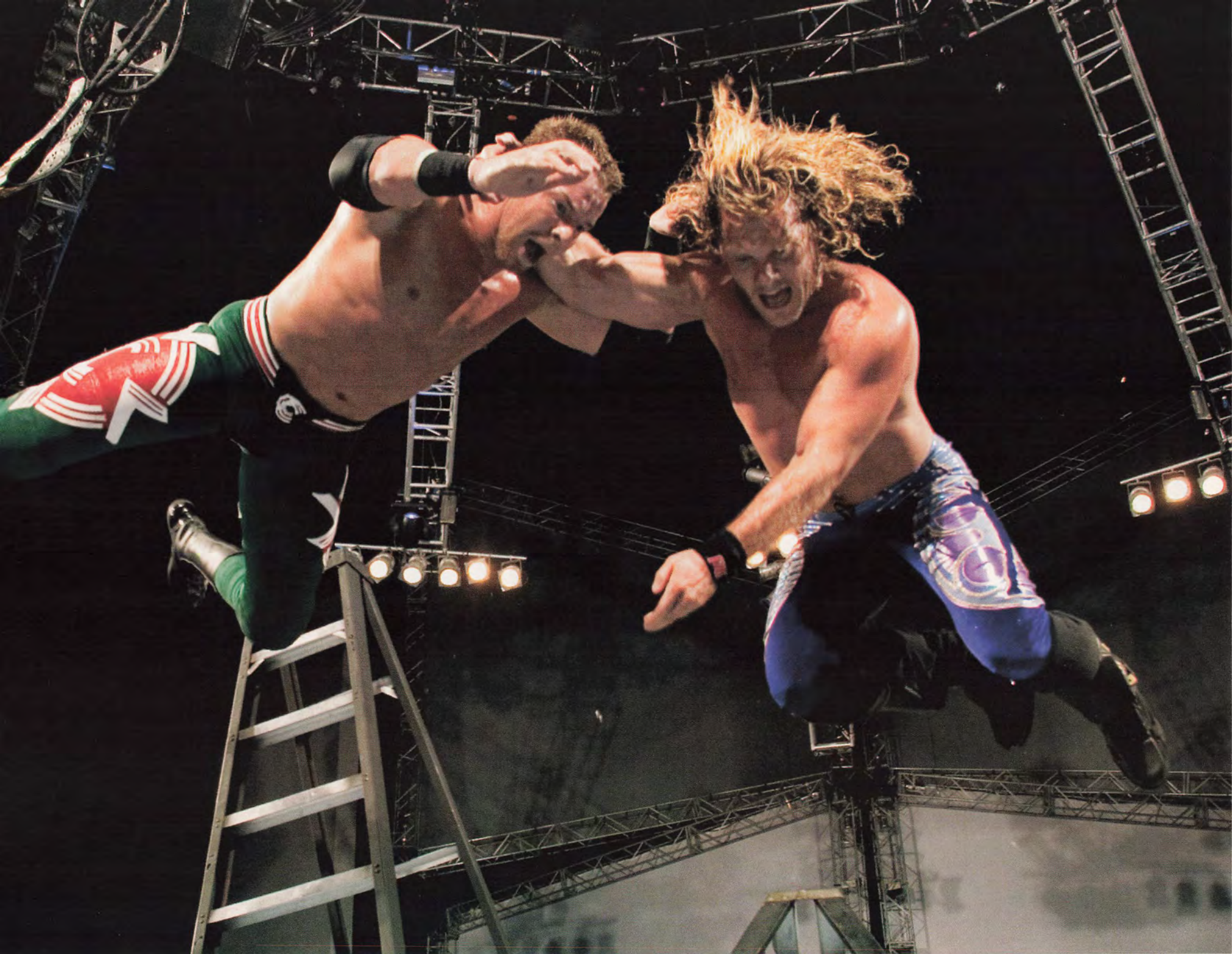
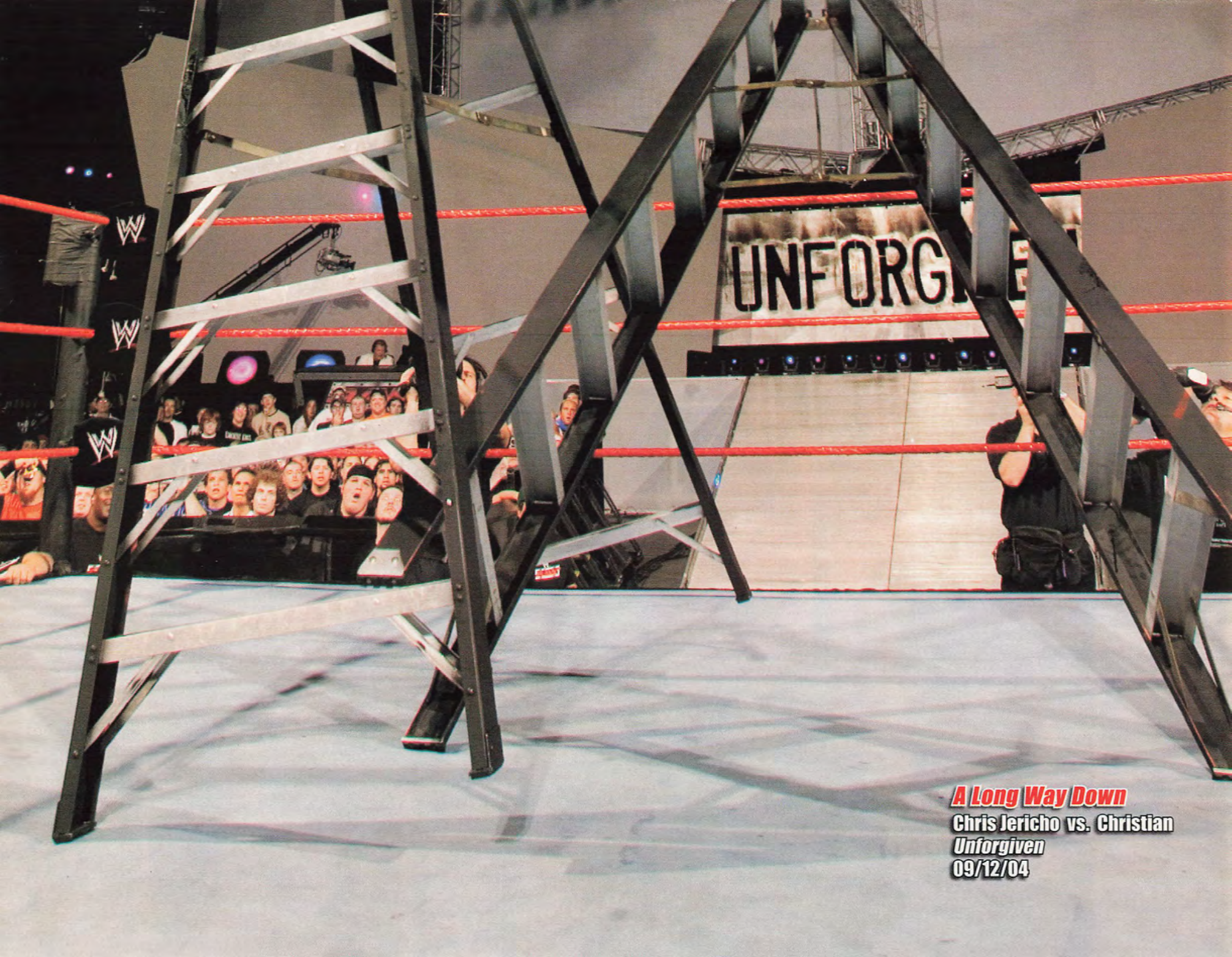


Rey Mysterio
SmackDown!
10/12/04

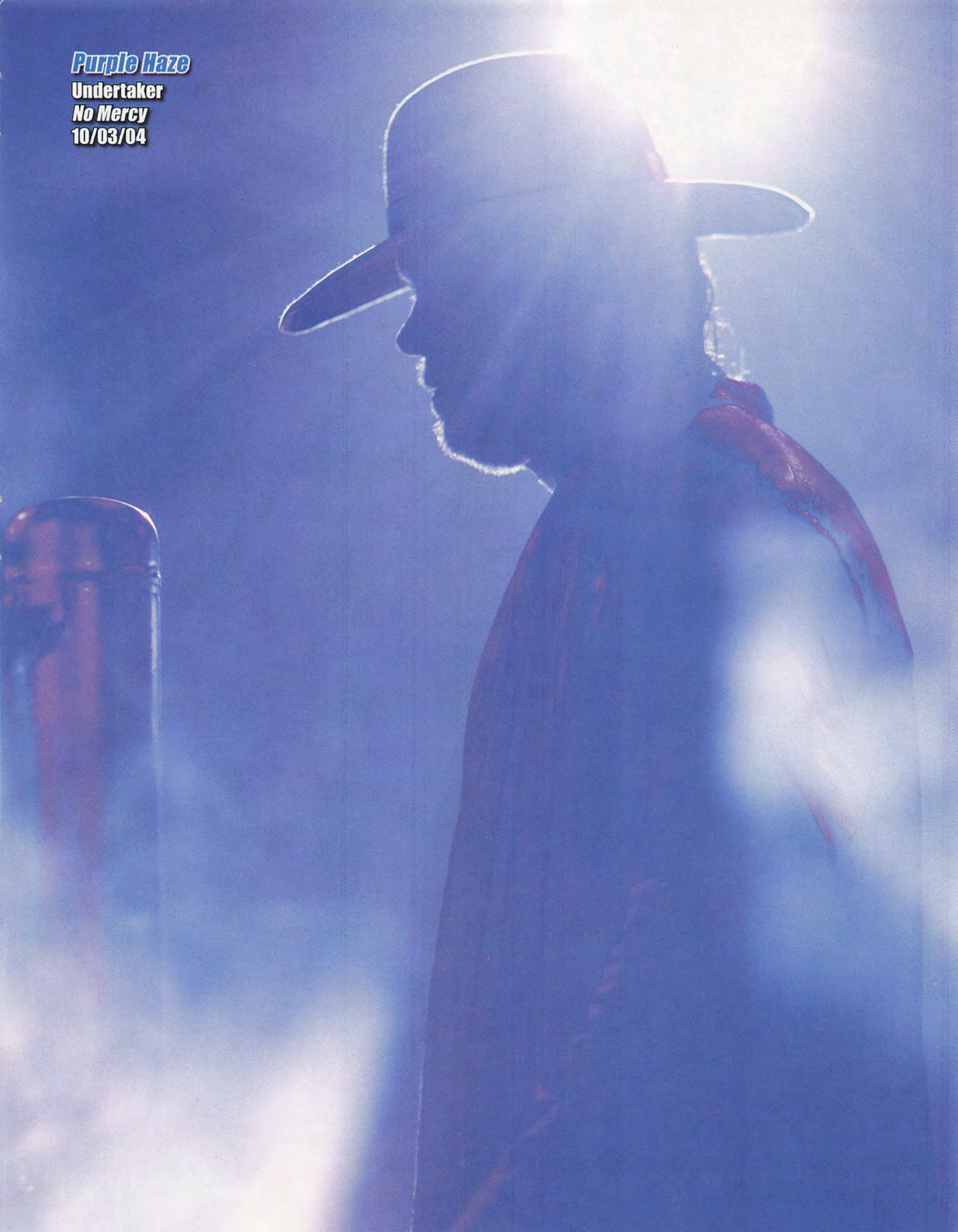




A Long Way Down
Chris Jericho vs. Christian
Unforgiven
09/12/04

Los Angeles Bloodbath

Eddie Guerrero vs. John "Bradshaw" Layfield
Judgment Day
5/16/04

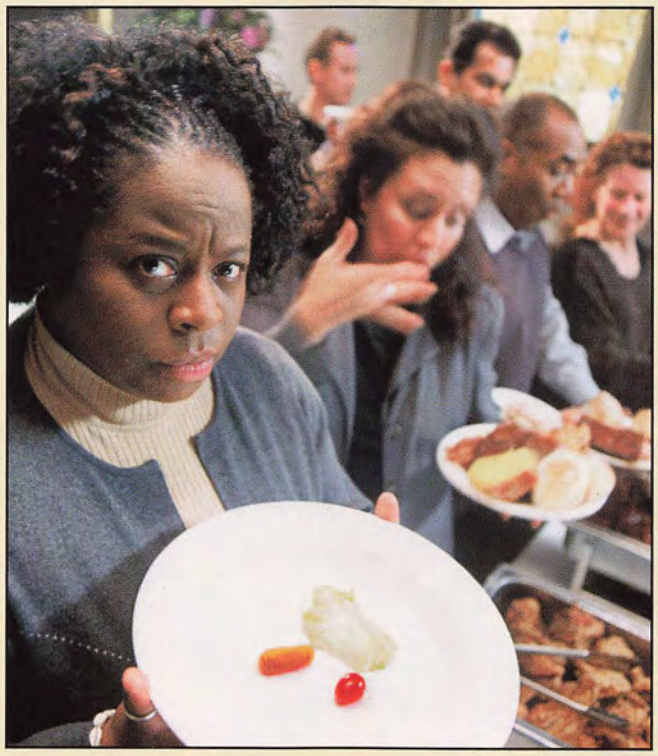

Purple Haze
Undertaker
No Mercy
10/03/04

The Ultimate Indignity
Victoria vs. Molly Holly
WrestleMania XX
3/14/04

Just For Kicks

Edge vs. Randy Orton
Raw
7/19/04

Through Hellfire and Brimstone
Kane
WrestleMania XX
3/14/04



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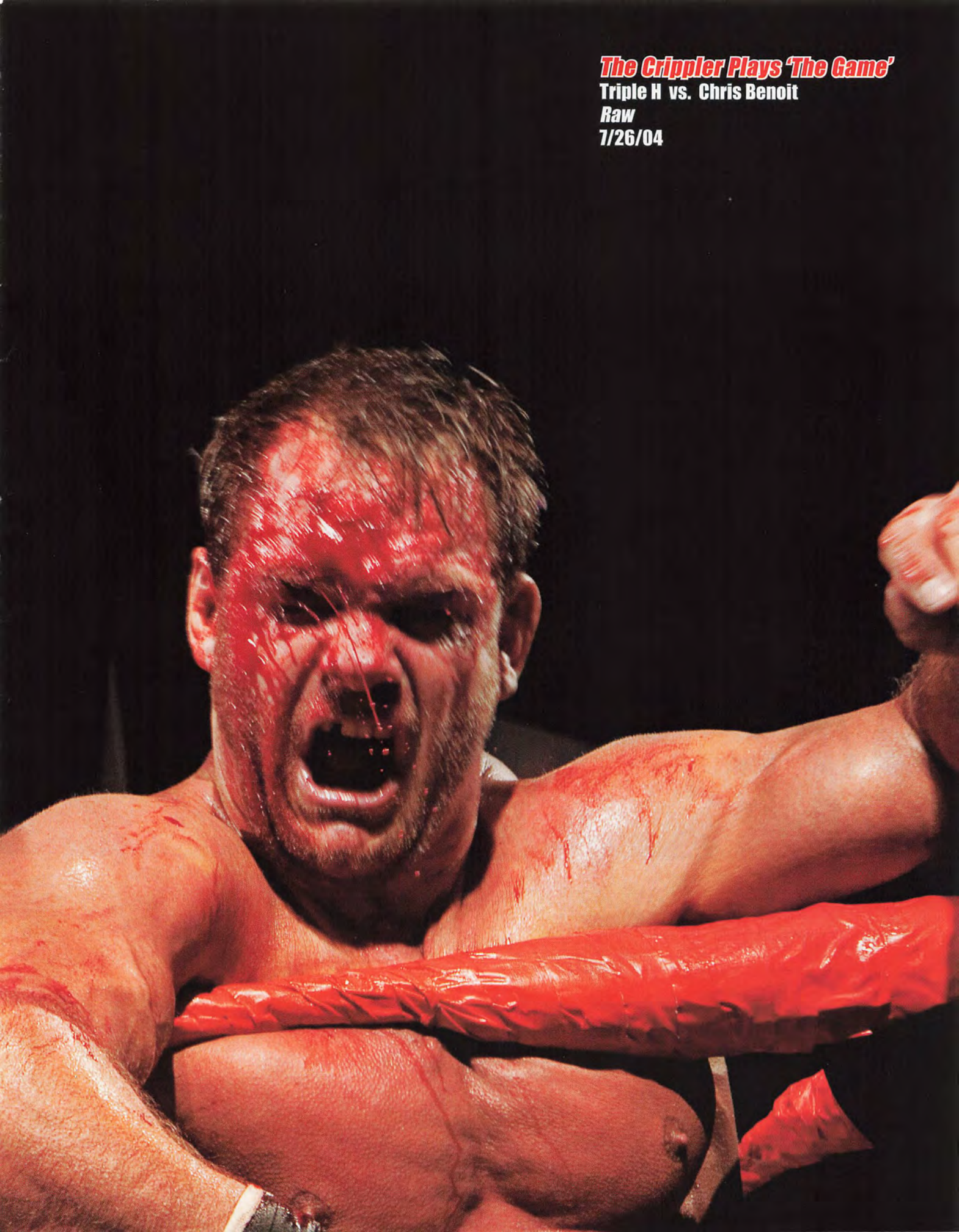
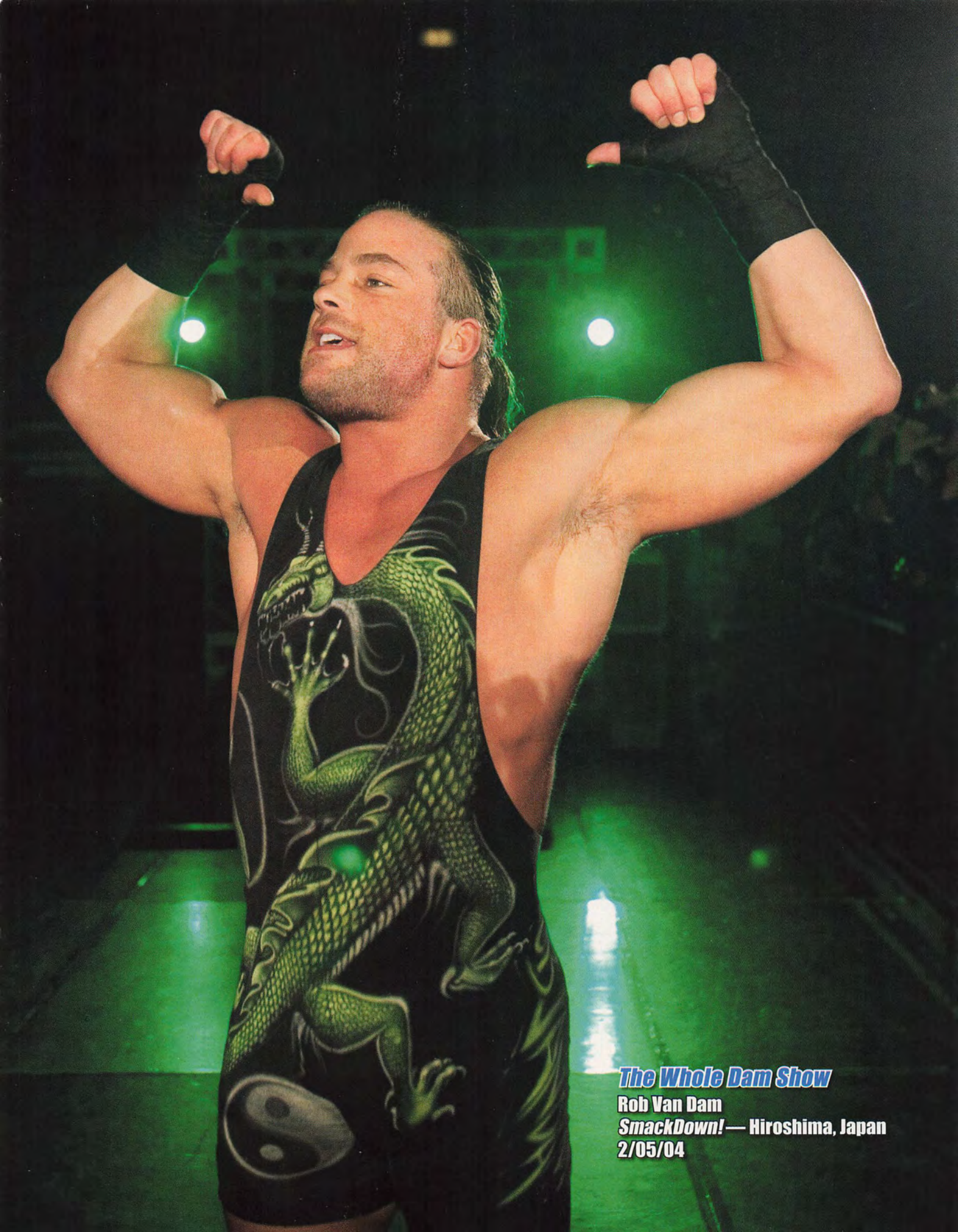


The Crippler Plays 'The Game'
Triple H vs. Chris Benoit
Raw
7/26/04

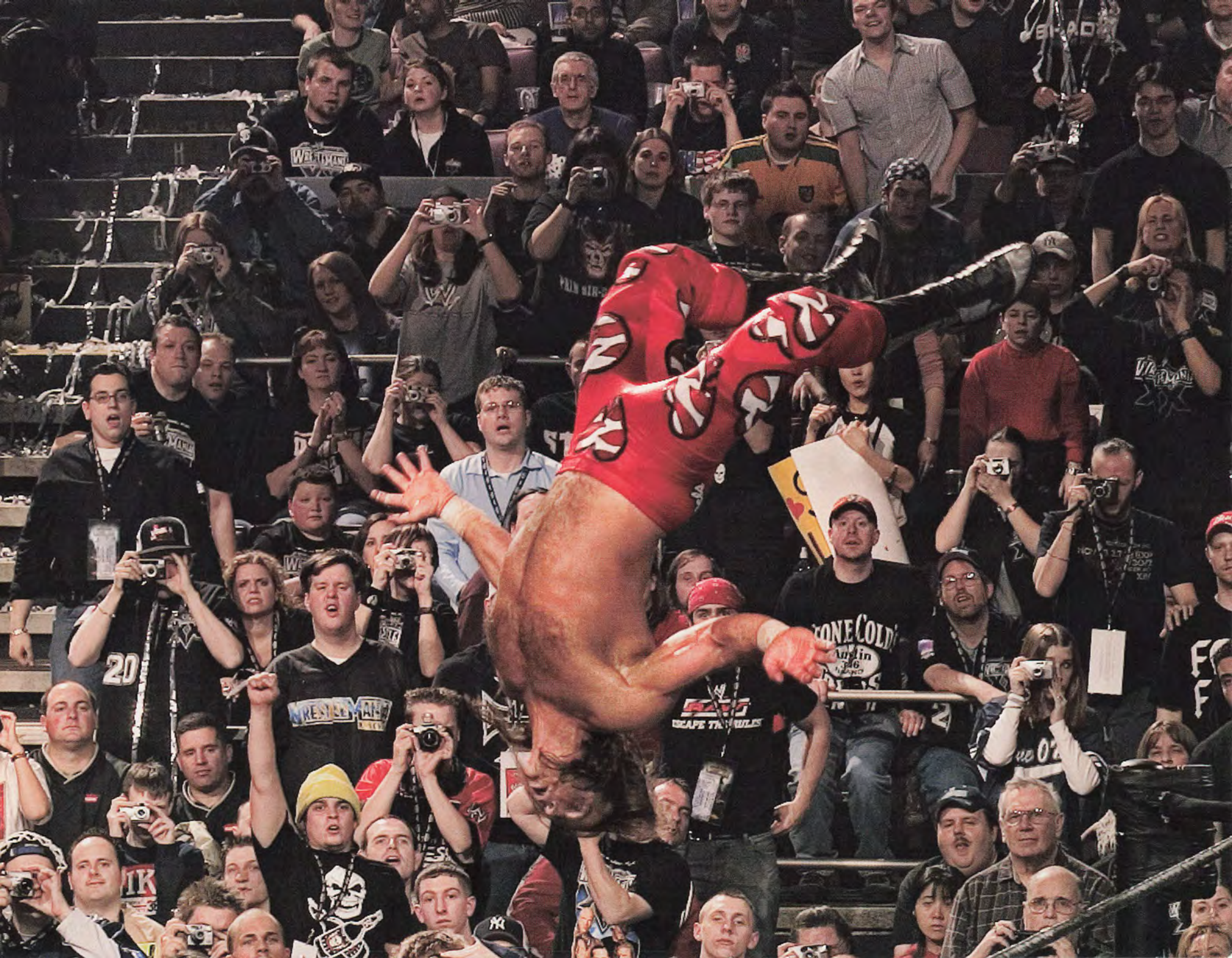
Thuganomics 101

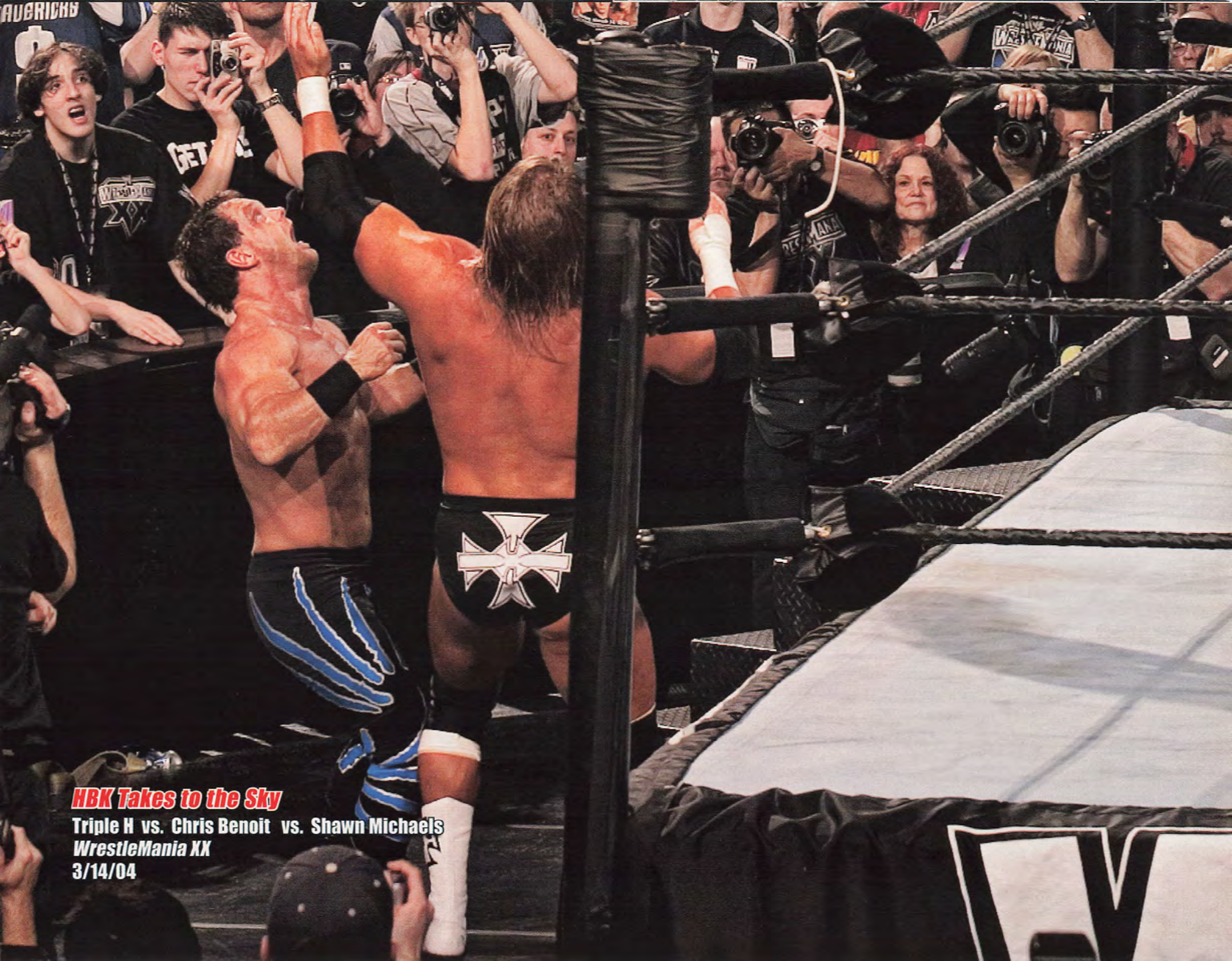
Booker T vs. John Cena
***SmackDown!* — Melbourne, Australia**
8/29/04



The Whole Dam Show

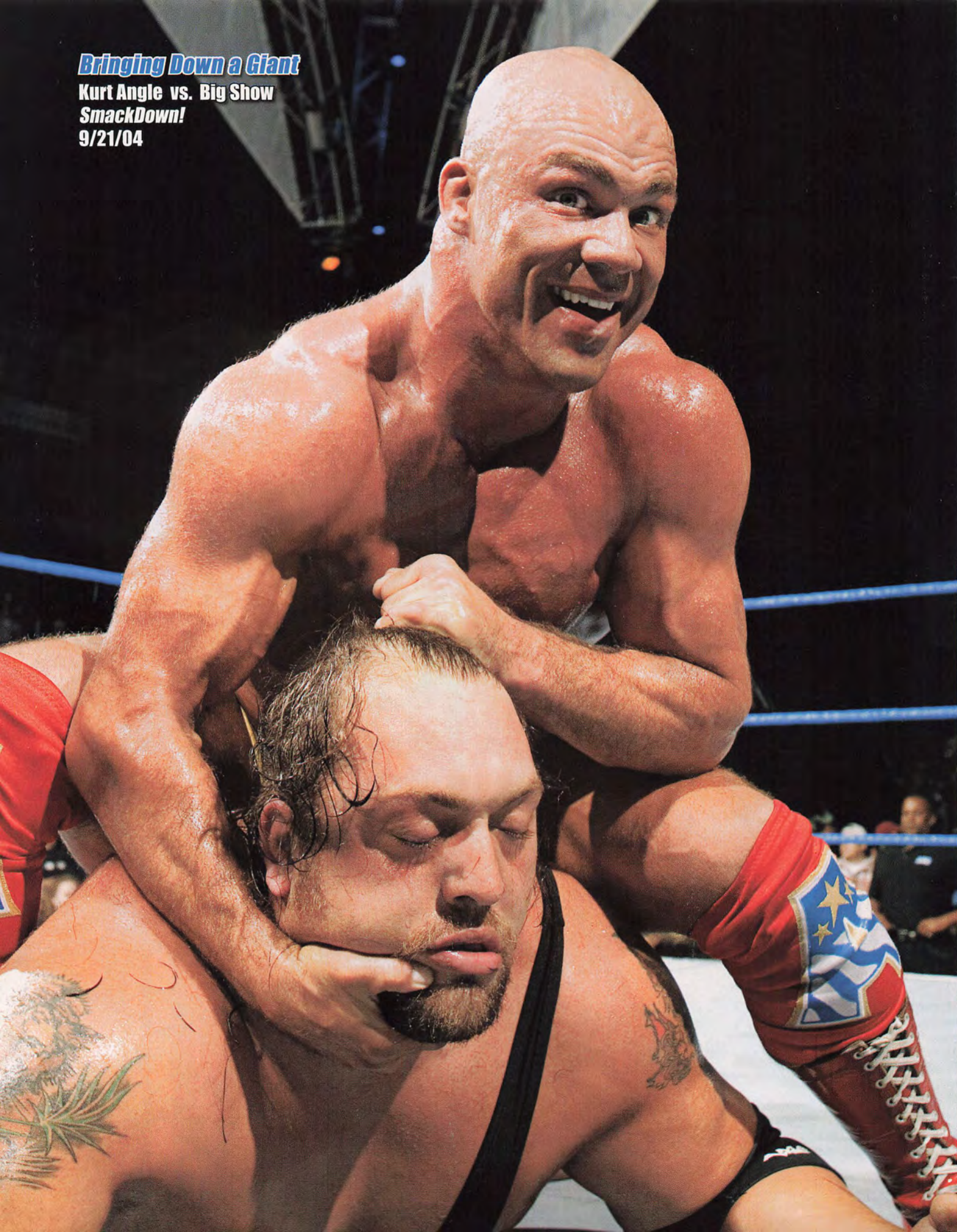
Rob Van Dam
***SmackDown!*— Hiroshima, Japan**
2/05/04


WRESTLEMANIA
STONE COLD
Austin
3:16



HBK Takes to the Sky

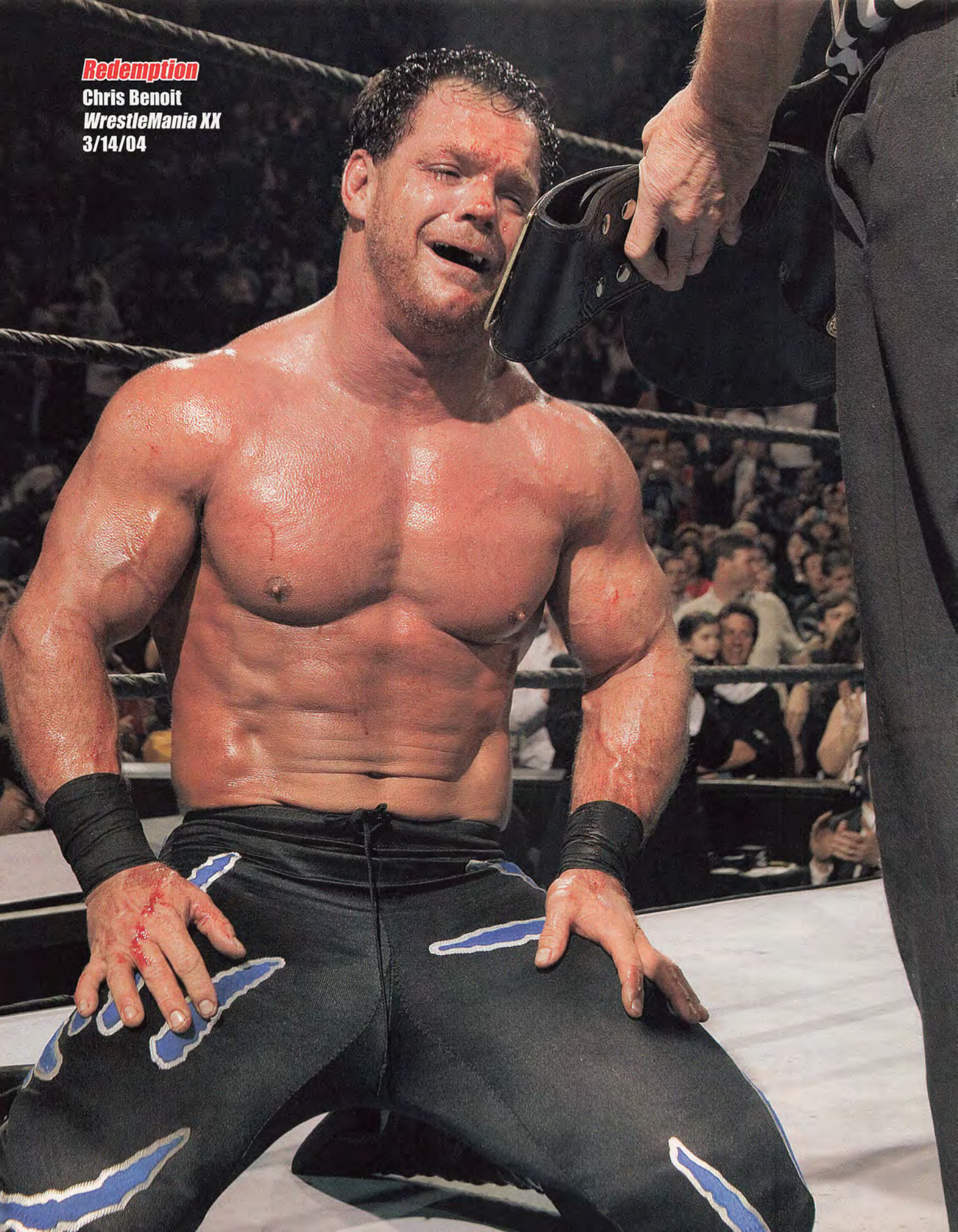
Triple H vs. Chris Benoit vs. Shawn Michaels
WrestleMania XX
3/14/04



Bringing Down a Giant
Kurt Angle vs. Big Show
SmackDown!
9/21/04

The Doctor Down Under

John Cena
***SmackDown!*—Melbourne, Australia**
8/29/04



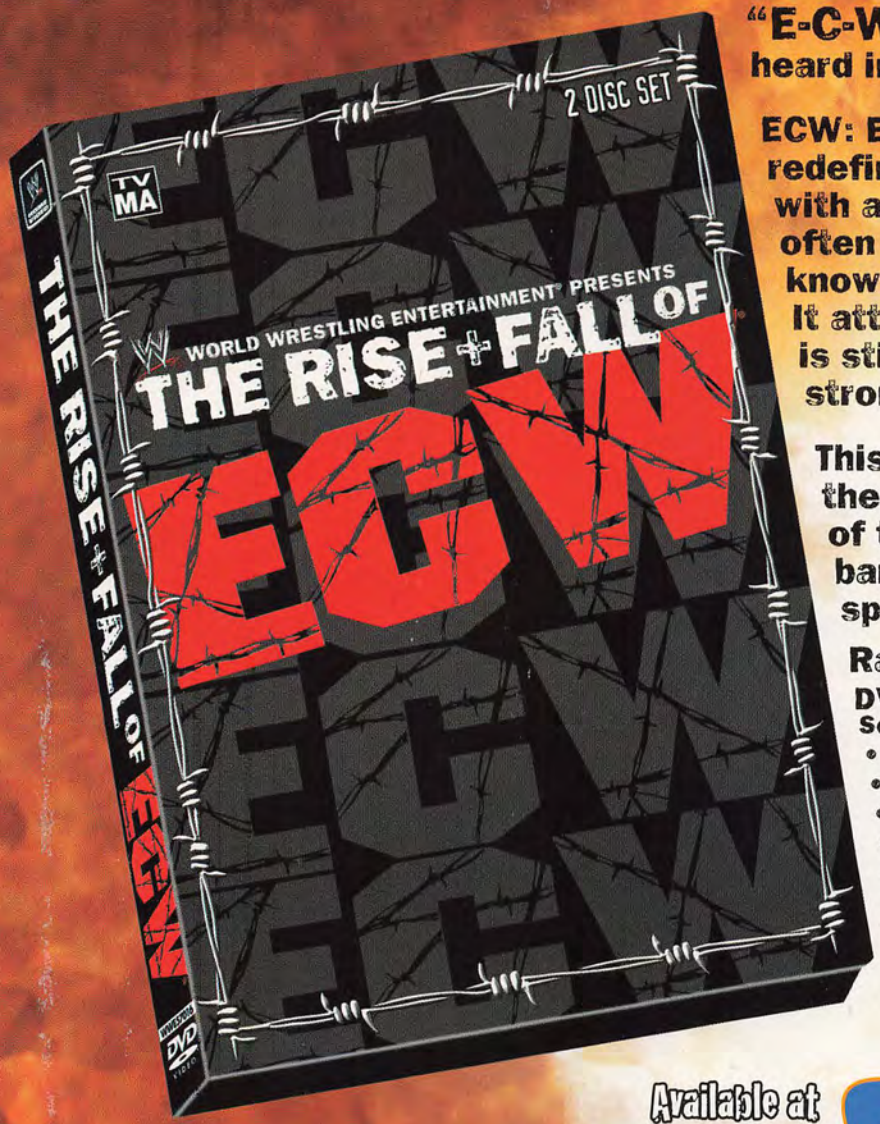
Redemption
Chris Benoit
WrestleMania XX
3/14/04

Beware: Falling Divas

Victoria vs. Molly Holly
Vengeance
7/11/04

Garden Party
Chris Benoit & Eddie Guerrero
WrestleMania XX
3/14/04

WARNING: CONTENT'S UNDER EXTREME PRESSURE!



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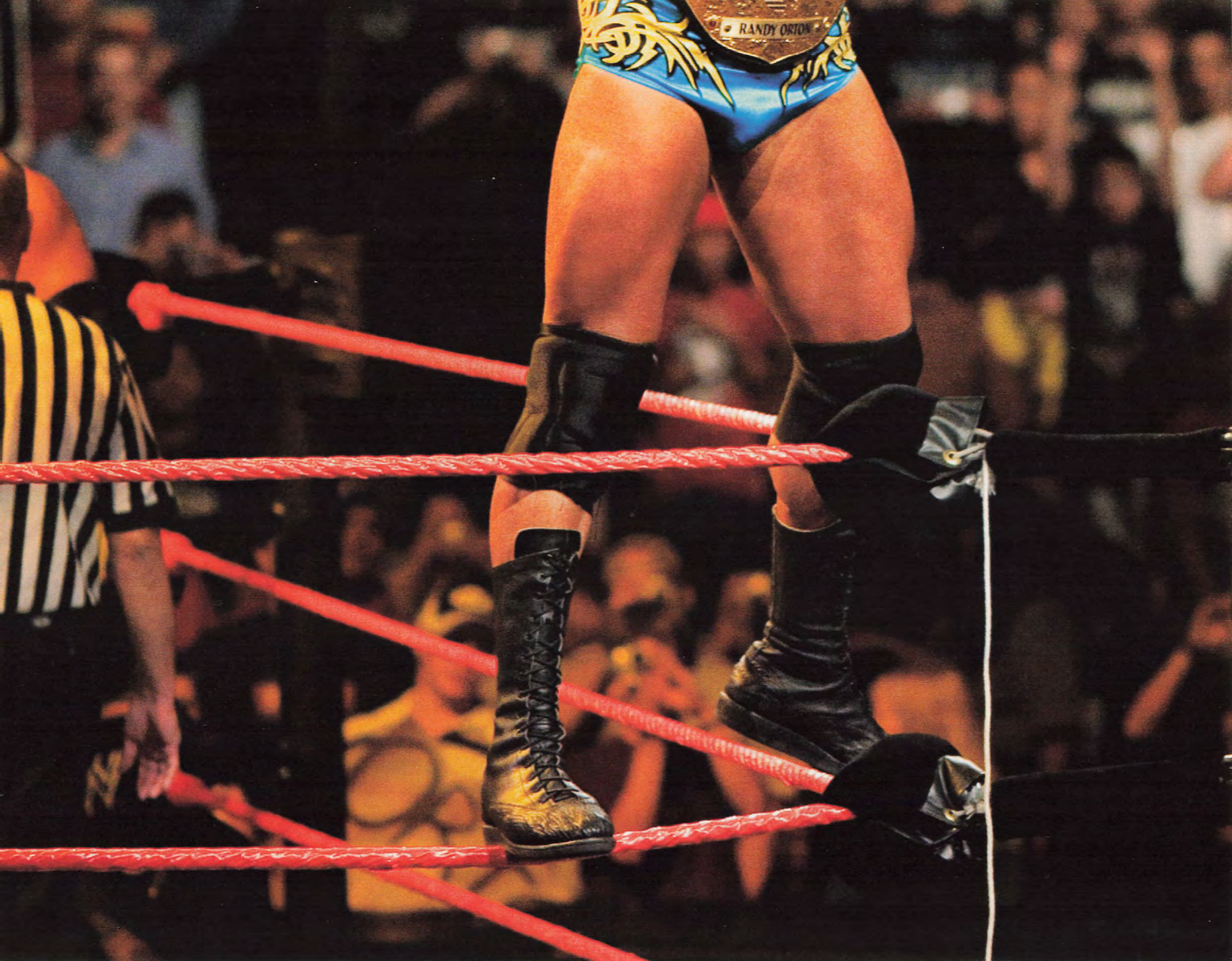
Made, Paid and Champ
Randy Orton
Unforgiven
9/12/04

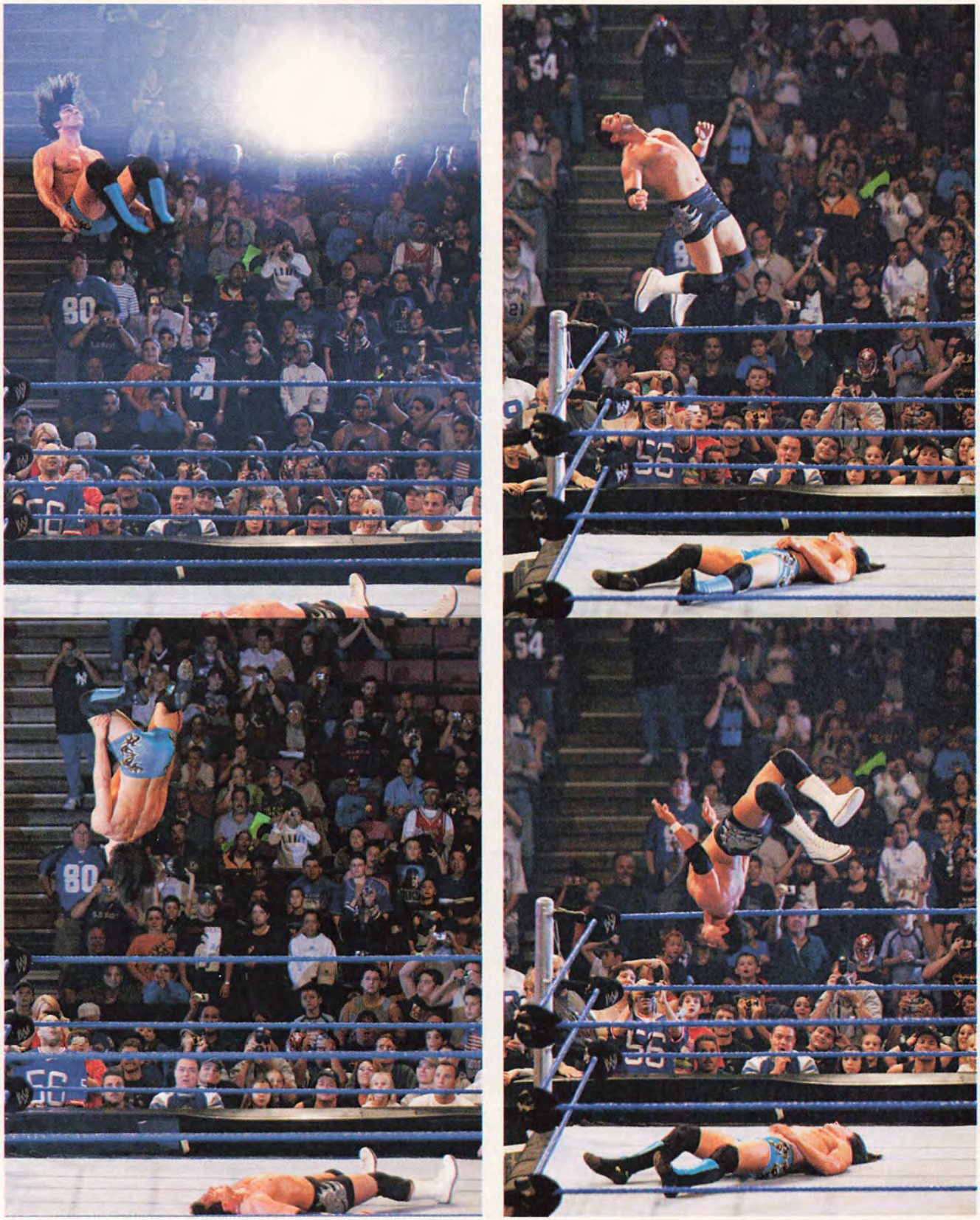

RANDY ORTON

Bringing the Pain
Kurt Angle vs. Eddie Guerrero
SmackDown! — Melbourne, Australia
8/29/04

The Sincerest Form of Flattery
Triple H & Eugene
Raw
6/21/04

Stacy Gets a Leg Up

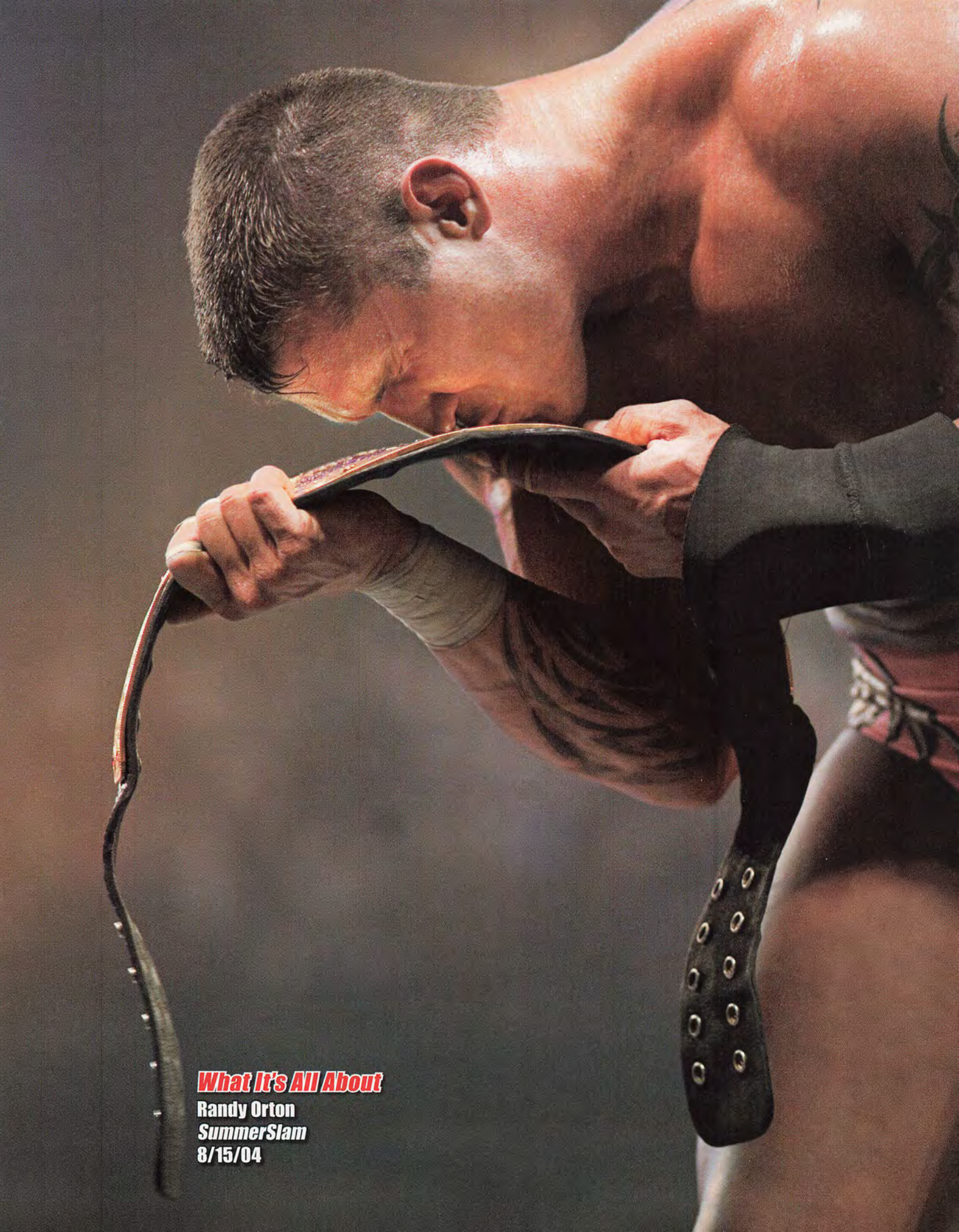
Diva Fulfill Your Fantasy Battle Royal
Taboo Tuesday
10/19/04



Billy Kidman vs. Paul London
No Mercy
10/03/04

Dead Man Triumphant

Undertaker
***SmackDown!* — Melbourne, Australia**
8/29/04



What It's All About
Randy Orton
SummerSlam
8/15/04

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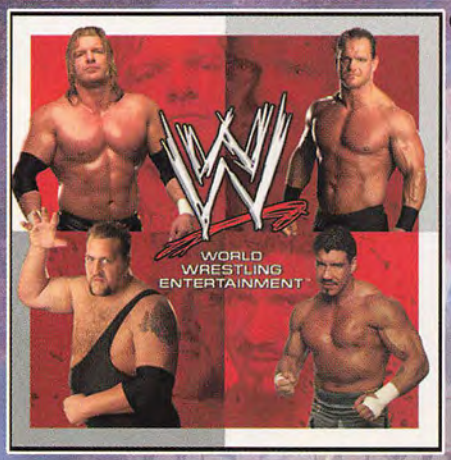

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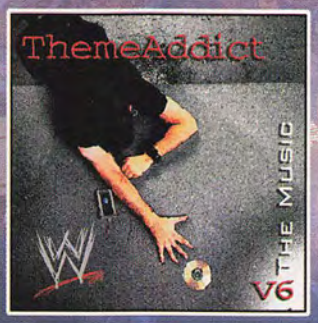

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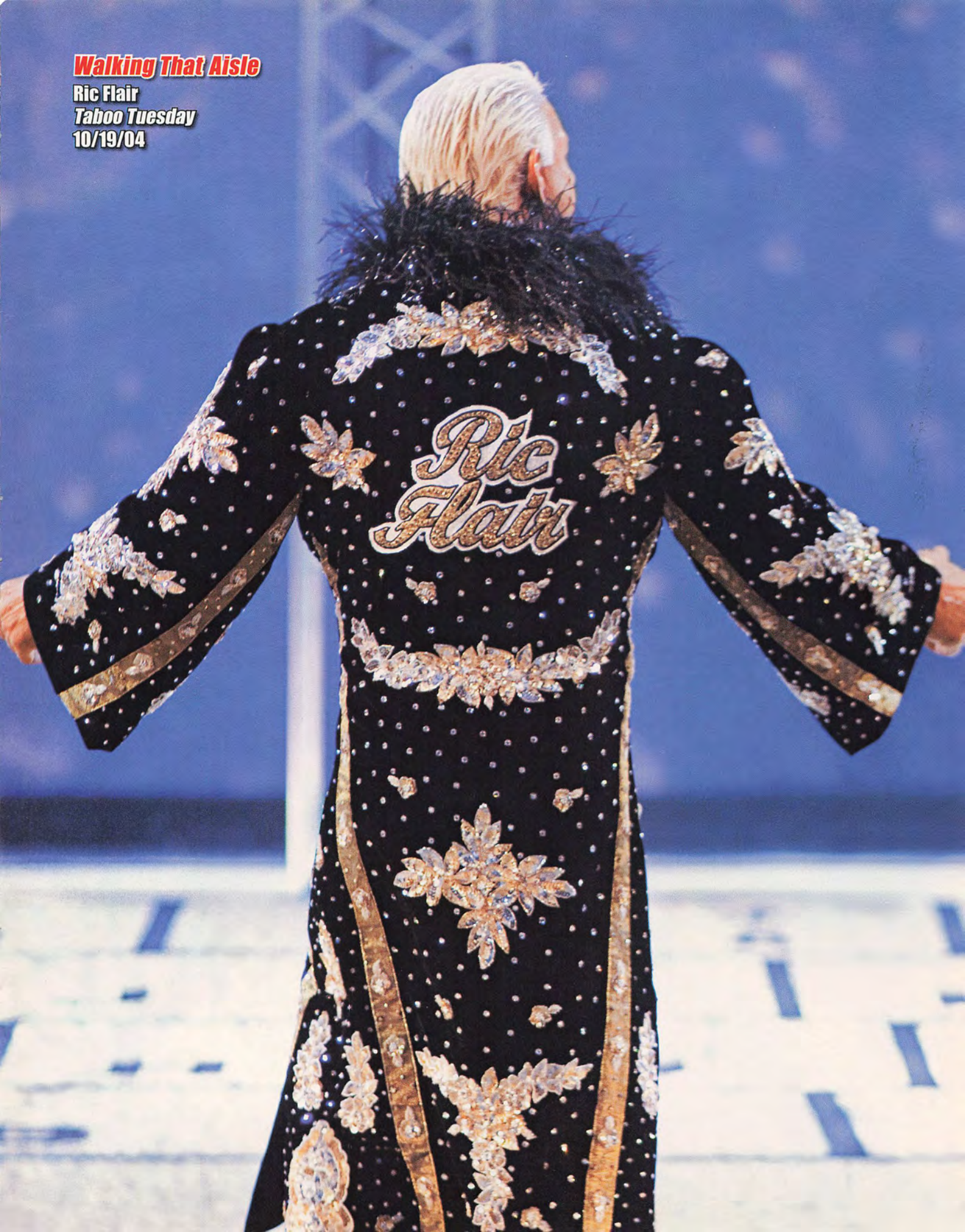
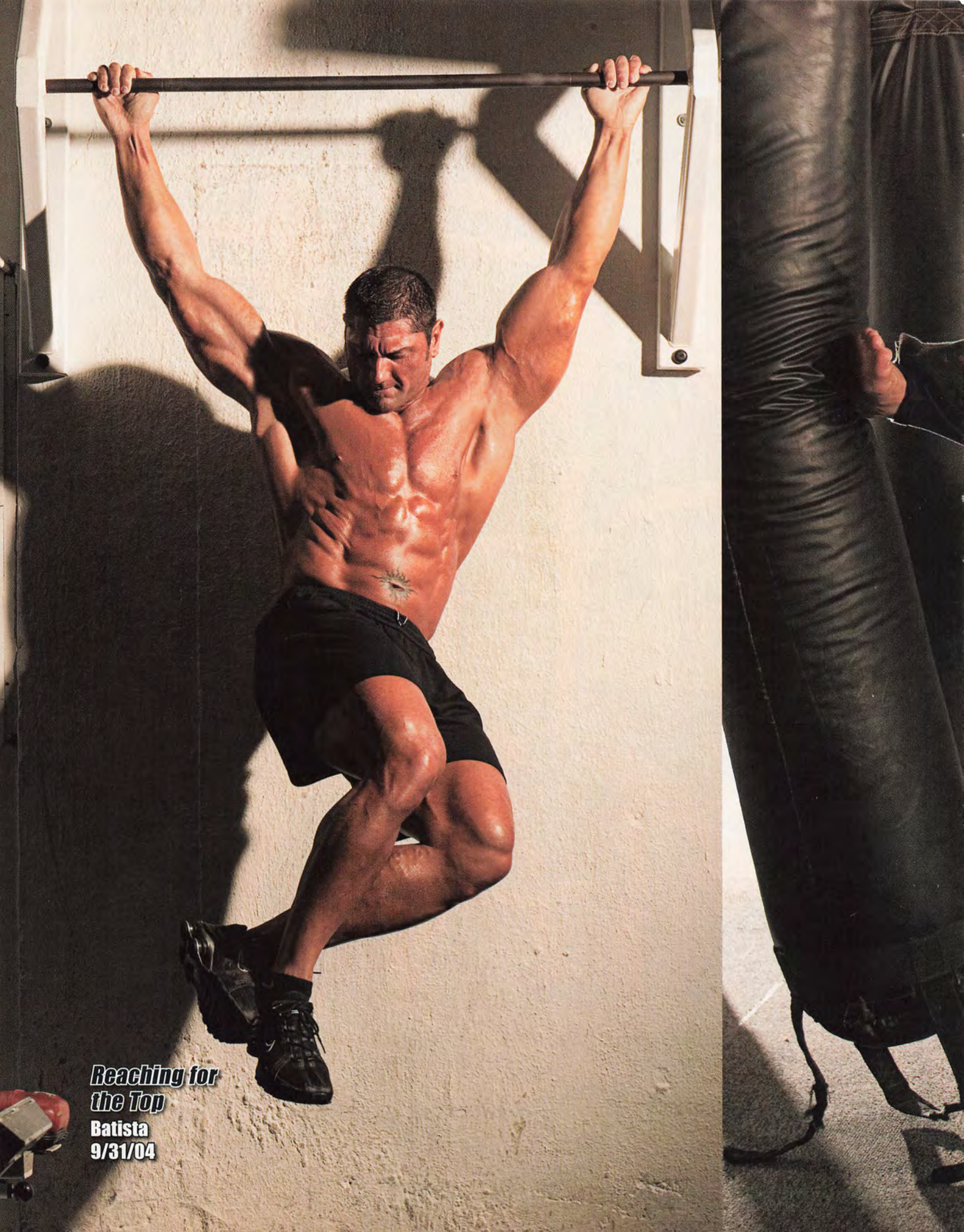
Raw
7/05/04



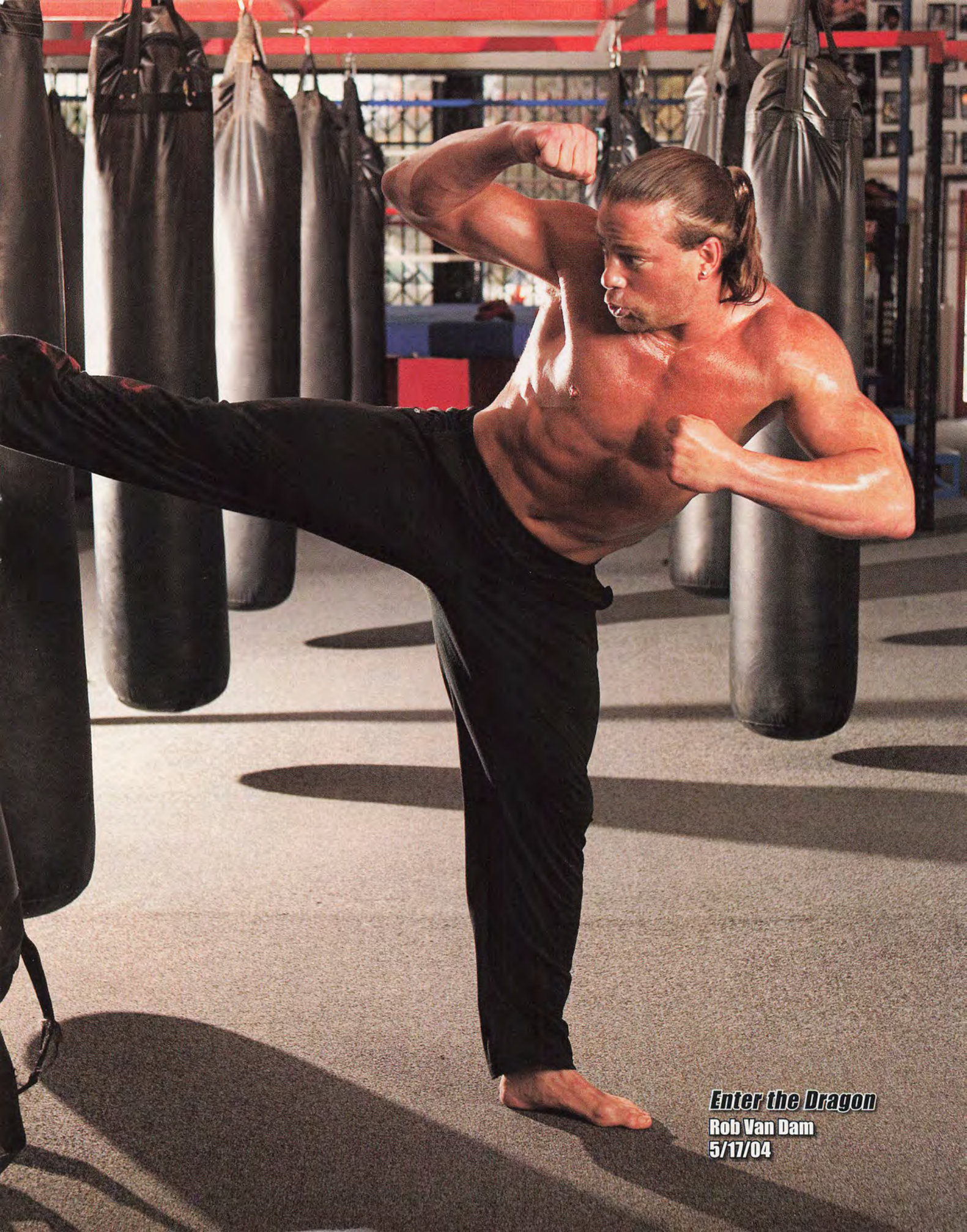
Walking That Aisle
Ric Flair
Taboo Tuesday
10/19/04

American Graffiti
John Cena
4/15/04

OFF
THE
MAT



Reaching for the Top
Batista
9/31/04



Enter the Dragon
Rob Van Dam
5/17/04

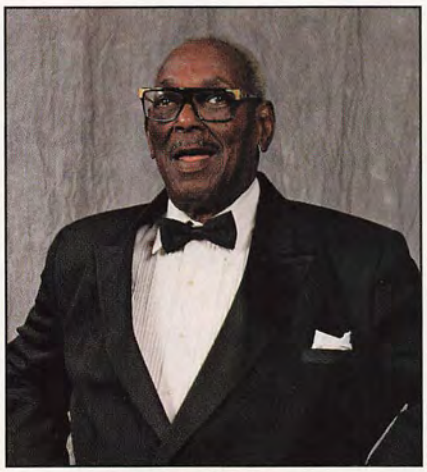
A Different Kind of Mask

Rey Mysterio
2/26/04

Totally Raw
Chris Benoit
1/27/04

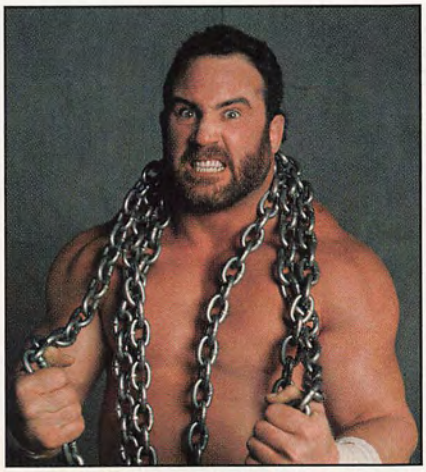
Making Music
Edge
5/26/04

FAREWELLS



James Dudley

James E. Barnett



Ray "Hercules" Fernandez

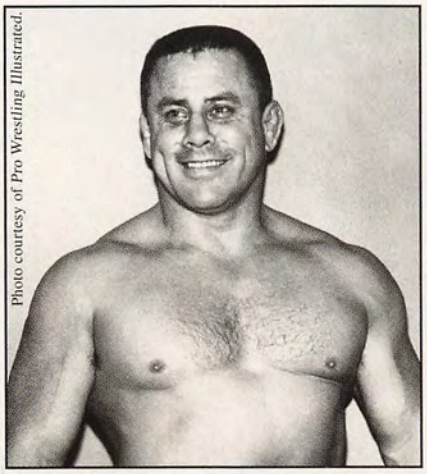
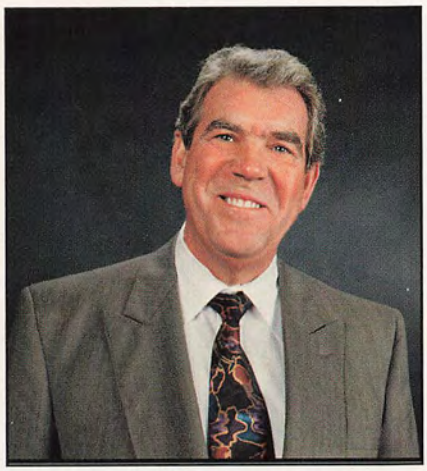


Photo courtesy of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*.

José "Pepper" Gomez

Marianna Komlos



Jack Tunney

Ray "Big Boss Man" Traylor

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